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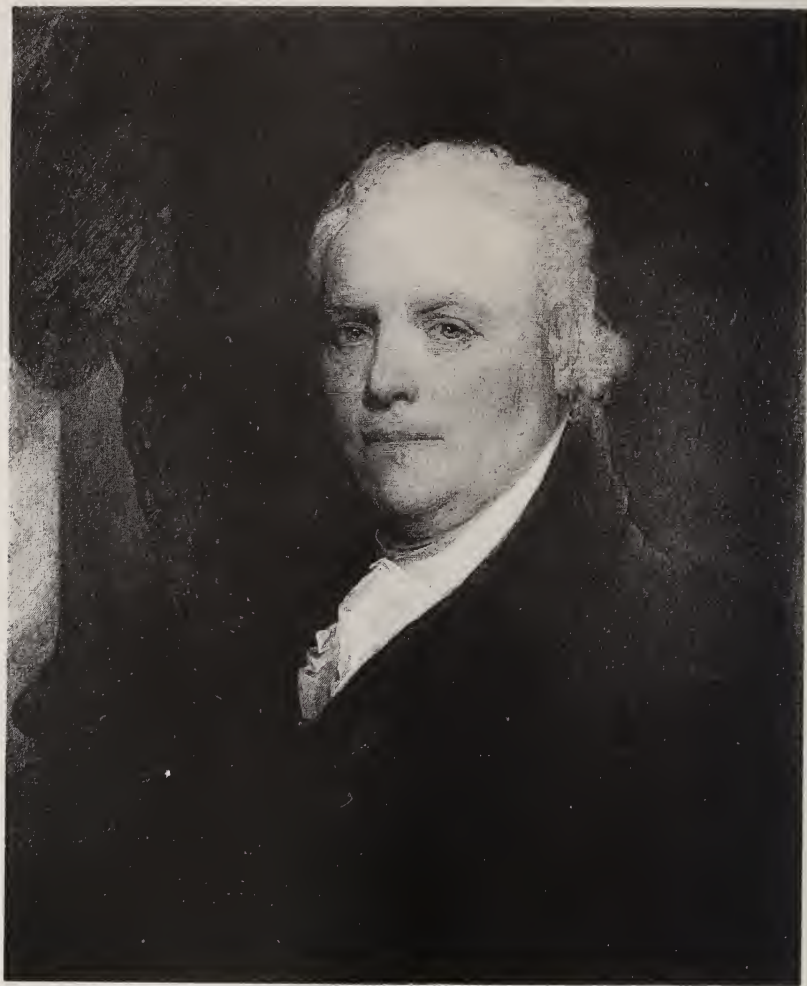
William Bingham's
Maine Lands 1790-1820

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General David Cobb

William Bingham's Resident Agent for the Maine Lands
Portrait by Gilbert Stuart

PUBLICATIONS
of
The Colonial Society of Massachusetts

VOLUME XXXVII
COLLECTIONS



WILLIAM BINGHAM'S
MAINE LANDS 1790-1820

II

Edited by

FREDERICK S. ALLIS, JR.



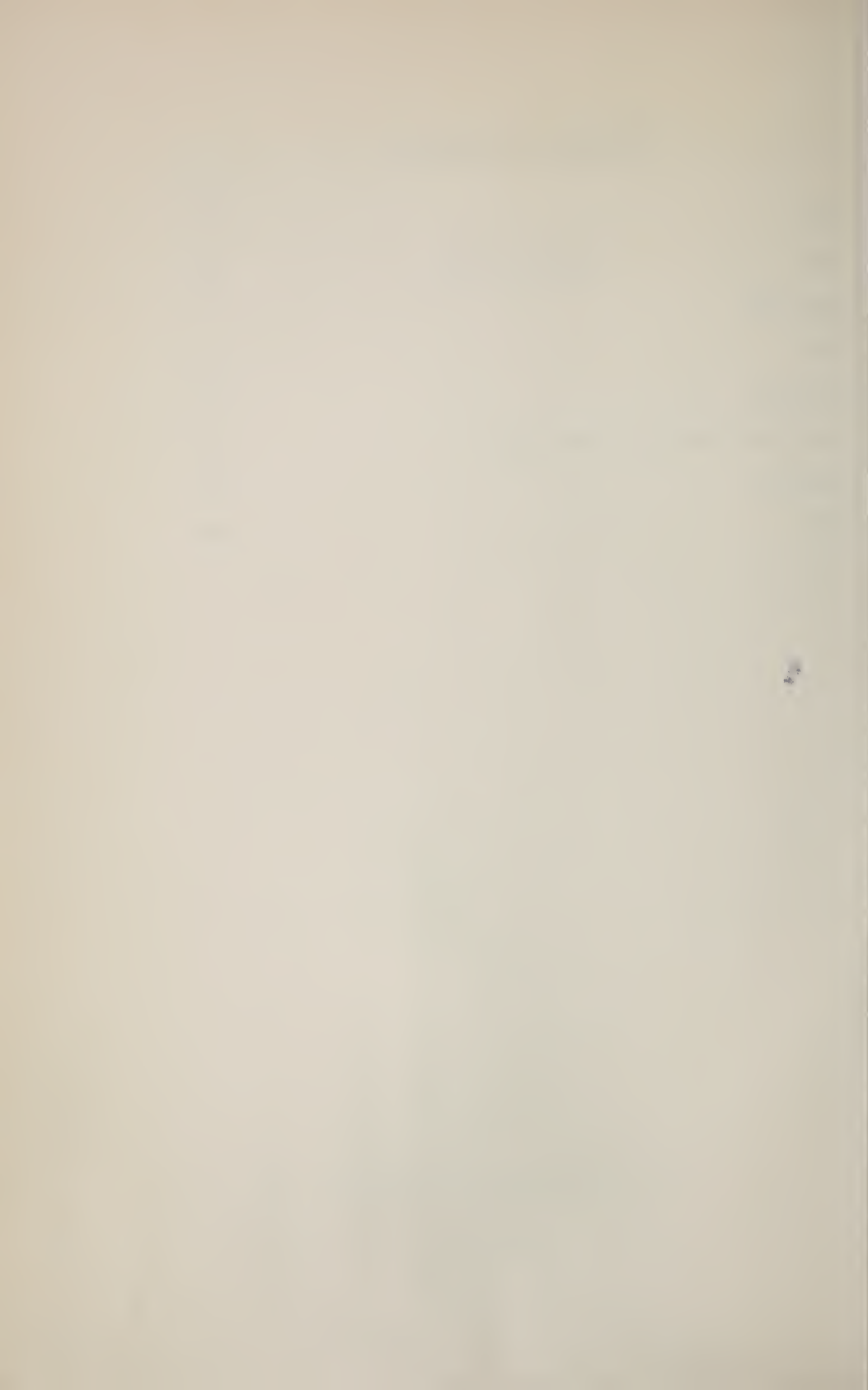
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William Bingham's
Maine Lands 1790-1820

Principal Manuscript Sources

Most of the documents printed in these volumes have been taken from one or another of four manuscript collections. These four collections, with the abbreviations which will be used in the text to designate them, are as follows:

<i>Collection</i>	<i>Abbreviation</i>
BARING PAPERS. This is a microfilm collection originally made by the Public Record Office in London from papers in the archives of the banking house of Baring Brothers. There is a print of this collection in the Library of Congress, together with a calendar of the papers.	BaP
BINGHAM PAPERS. These papers cover most of the business activities of William Bingham during his lifetime and include as well the records of the Bingham Estate during the nineteenth century. They are now at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, where they were recently placed on deposit by the Bingham Trustees.	BP
COBB PAPERS. These are the papers of General David Cobb, bequeathed to the Colonial Society of Massachusetts by his great-grandson George Nixon Black. They are now on deposit at the Massachusetts Historical Society.	CP
KNOX PAPERS. This well-known collection of the papers of General Henry Knox is the property of the New England Historic Genealogical Society and has been for some years on deposit at the Massachusetts Historical Society.	KP

Chapter XI

1796

WITH the successful negotiation of the sale to Alexander Baring, the basic structure of William Bingham's speculation in Maine Lands was complete. To be sure, many minor problems awaited solution, and the program for the improvement and sale of the property was still to be decided upon. After the spring of 1796, however, the story of the speculation falls naturally into a chronological, rather than a topical, pattern, and the focus of attention shifts from Philadelphia to the District of Maine. It remained to be seen whether the enterprise, backed by the financial resources of Bingham and Baring and conducted on the spot by General David Cobb, could be made to prosper as its backers hoped it might.

The year 1796 was spent primarily in organization, in laying the foundations for future exploitation. First of all, the problem of the "back tract" must be met. Baring had agreed to take half of this property if satisfactory terms could be worked out with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Secondly, it was important that Bingham and Baring see for themselves what they had purchased; and thus it was that they spent the summer of 1796 touring their property down east. Thirdly, General Cobb must be given specific instructions on the handling of a host of problems which were confronting him as agent.

On February twelfth, having given what assistance he could to Bingham in the negotiations with Baring, Cobb left Philadelphia for New England and the coming season's campaign down east.¹ His grateful employer had given him one hundred guineas as reward for his help in bringing off the sale to Baring,² and the future of the concern looked very promising. The letters which follow illuminate the progress of Bingham's speculation during 1796, both as regards the work of the high command in Philadelphia and the accomplishments of the agent in the field.

¹ See *Bangor Historical Magazine*, v. 53.

² See Bingham to Cobb, Philadelphia, 9 February 1796, in CP.

*Stephen Jones's Log-Cutting Agreement, Machias,
2 January 1796 [CP]*³

For and in consideration of permission being given me to cut pine logs upon the lands purchased from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts by William Bingham Esquire and Company, I hereby promise to pay him or his order, three thousand, three hundred, and thirty three feet of merchantable pine boards, to be delivered at a convenient salt-water landing in Machias, for every hundred pine logs I shall cut or cause to be cut on said lands, and in like proportion for a greater or lesser quantity. And, I further promise I will not cut any tree that is fit to make a mast, nor make any unnecessary waste in cutting said logs; and that I will render a true accompt, on oath if required, of the logs so cut on said lands. In testimony hereof, I sign my name—

STEPHEN JONES

Machias

January 2nd, 1796

*Charles Renuff to Cobb, Littleborough, 12 January 1796 [CP]*⁴

Honourd Sir: I am about to inform your onour of my curcomstances. I have ben in this willderness a number of years agrubbing as it ware half dead a great parte of the time. In the first place I was deprived of my health by maintaining my countrys freedom to which your onour is an eye witness, and from that witness I begg sum releaf to my sustenance. It is not long sence I have ben warned by Mr. S. Wilde that we should have one hundred acres of land, by paying forty dollars. I receive the news very kindly. But I pray it may pleas your onour to lett me have mine as those that was on the lands befour eighty four.⁵ And ef your onour sees

³ This agreement is included as typical of many which Cobb made with lumbermen who wished to cut timber on the Bingham lands. There is an almost identical agreement with Josiah Hitchings, dated Machias, 7 January 1796, in CP. These agreements were probably negotiated by Thomas Cobb in his father's absence.

⁴ This document is included as one of the few letters from squatters in CP. The land referred to was Cobb's property on the Androscoggin, which he had purchased of the State in 1792. See Eastern Land Papers, Box 8, in the Massachusetts Archives. Cobb's son-in-law, Samuel S. Wilde, in a letter dated Warren, 16 February 1796, in CP, gave a detailed report to the General on the state of this property.

⁵ This would mean that, according to established Massachusetts policy, he could have one hundred acres for five dollars. See the Resolve of 26 March 1788.

fitt to consider me ibeg you would right to whom shall conduct those affairs with us.

These from your most obedient humble servant

CHARLES RENUFF

Littels Borough January 12 1796

[Endorsed by Cobb] "February 12 96"

*Bingham to Knox, Philadelphia, 10 February 1796 [KP]*⁶

My dear General:

Philadelphia February 10th 1796

I am favored with yours of the 1st February and observe the result of the conversation you have had with the Committee on the subject of the contract for the additional million.⁷ It is idle in them to make any objection to confining the quantity, as the map they first sent only comprehended a million and was in their estimation at the time a compliance with the contract. Nothing has happened since to change the nature of the case, and for the intermediate period of delay, no injury can be sustained, as interest will accrue, as a consideration for the suspension of payment.

Besides, the Committee cannot assert that they ever contemplated a sale of such a large quantity, as the tenor and spirit of the contract are entirely opposed to such an idea.

As I observe that, in your conversation with the Committee, you have confined your objections to a few points, it may not be amiss to enter more fully into the merits of the question, as I may thereby furnish you with some hints that might not otherwise have occurred to you.

In the first place this business must be new modified, with consent of the parties, as the terms of the contract cannot literally, nor in the extent of its spirit, be complied with, arising from the mistakes of the Committee, who sold the land and were ignorant concerning its geography.

I think I will make it clearly appear that the charge of cavilling and quibbling relates more pointedly to their conduct, in wishing to force such a large quantity on us, than to ours in resisting the attempt.

It will be necessary to begin with the boundaries of their survey, and contrast them with those specified in, and called for, by the contract.

The eastern boundary is to be the river Schoodyck and a line extending

⁶ KP, xxxi11. 124.

⁷ The survey of the "back tract," when presented by the Committee, was closer to three million acres than the one million originally expected. See above, pp. 559-561. See also Osgood Carleton's map, above, facing page 16. There are copies of the "back tract" contract in BP and KP, xxxi. 44.

from the source thereof until it meets the highlands, whereas the eastern line of the present tract is at a great distance, west of the river Schoodyck, and is not bounded thereon in any one point, which is a total departure from the terms of our agreement.

This line is therefore altogether arbitrary; but what is a more flagrant violation of the contract, on the part of the Committee, is that three townships, to the east of my eastern line, adjoining it, and betwixt it and the river Schoodyck, and consequently included within the territory contracted for, have been sold (March 2 1795) to Goodman, Maynard and Holland,⁸ which of course preclude the Committee from the power of fulfilling their terms with me. But what is well worthy of remark is, that the price of those townships, from the Committee's report, which you sent me, does not appear to be more than 25 cents per acre, for you will observe, that 21,760 acres amount to but £2,222.12.9, which includes the interest for the time for which credit is given, as you will observe is done in the extension of the obligations I gave the Committee, for the first cost was but 200,000 dollars or £60,000, but including interest it amounts to £73,135.10. Now, our lands will cost, if the Committee charge interest, at least this price, independent of the settling duties, which will be five cents additional. I wonder where, then, is the favor? to give us lands in a retired remote situation, at the same price with townships selected for their goodness, in the neighbourhood of the Schoodyck Lakes, with a passage to the sea. There does not appear any marks of favor or affection in this business.

But they will be less exposed to contend the point when it [is] considered that the other lines are equally faulty and imperfect. The first article specifies that the westerly line is to be bounded at the distance of six miles from the great Eastern Branch of the Penobscot River. Now by viewing the map, this line will appear to extend far beyond the river, thereby abandoning all the advantages (contracted for) of a vicinity to the river thro' the whole course of the line, and consequently the benefit of water conveyance for produce. At the same time it evinces the want of knowledge on the part of the Committee, of the geography of this country.

Besides this line, when it had accompanied the Penobscot as far as it would go, and had thus far terminated its course, should have continued on a perpendicular, drawn from the extremity thereof.

⁸ For this sale to Titus Goodman, Jonathan Maynard, and Park Holland, see *Report of the Committee for the Sale of Eastern Lands* (1795), Table xvii, which includes the prices which Bingham quotes below. These three townships are the present Great Lake Stream Plantation, Waite, and Talmadge.

Whereas, it suddenly changes to the westward, and takes a perpendicular direction from what is supposed to be the source of the Penobscot, but which is absolutely not so, as will appear from the evidence of the map, copy of which I enclose you.

With respect to the north line, which is to be the highlands, that separates Canada from the United States, it is only to be ascertained by a conventional arrangement, as no *exparte* survey can form a boundary that will decidedly be acquiesced in, by both parties. Now, how can an unsettled line be taken as a boundary for the conveyance of lands, which depends on the opinion of two parties, one of which has not been consulted?

On the contrary, provision should be made for the immediate settlement of this point, thro the intervention of the commissioners who are to determine the river St. Croix. Therefore this line, which apparently is the only boundary to which the Committee might suppose there was no objection, is as exceptionable as the others, for, untill it is decided, there can be no absolute right to convey lands, any more than in the spot intervening betwixt the two waters, which by the different parties, are supposed to be the river St. Croix.

The south line should extend to the Schoodyck and be continued along my northern boundary, whereas it is arbitrarily stopped at the bounds of the Lottery Townships.

But what is still more striking, as relative to the idea of the views of the Committee, as connected with the quantity, which was never supposed to be more than 1,000,000 acres, is that by the 3d Article, the payment including interest is stipulated to be no more than thirty thousand dollars annually, untill *the whole principal and interest shall be discharged*. On these terms, there can be no objection to receive *all* the lands of the Committee's survey, but they will be placed in a serious predicament—3,000,000 acres at 24 cents (which with interest it will cost) will amount to 720,000 dollars, the interest on which will alone be 43,000 dollars, so that by paying but 30,000 dollars annually, not three fourths of the interest would even be paid, and no part of the capital be ever extinguished. No more positive and convincing argument could be required, that the Committee was under a palpable mistake, relative to the quantity contracted for, or they have made the most absurd and losing stipulations, with respect to payments. But further, suppose all the lands within the boundaries specified in the first Article had been surveyed, including of course, those betwixt the present arbitrary eastern line and the river Schoodyck, and from the source of the Schoodyck to the highlands, it would have comprehended in the return, upwards of two additional millions of

acres. What then would have been the state of the case and the situation of the Committee? A payment of 30,000 dollars annually for upwards of five millions of acres at 21 cents.

They must have good nerves, if they could support the cavils that would arise out of the reflections on this case. On the contrary, I think that such is the hold we have of them, from the existing circumstances, that so far from supposing any difficulty on their part, I should think they would readily agree to renounce the interest for the intervening period, from the 18th April 1793, and then to close the contract for a million of acres.

We stand on very high ground with these gentlemen, for there is not a single line run agreeable to contract: the southern line, from not being sufficiently extended; the eastern line from not having the Schoodyck for its boundary; the western line, from being carried beyond the river Penobscot; and the northern line from its being at points not altogether determined.

If the Committee had not been embarrassed, they would not have so long suspended the survey of the lands, which by the 12th Article they agreed should be effected within one year from the 18 April 1792, whereas the first survey was not returned until the spring of 1795.

I enclose you copy of a return of the first survey sent to me in the year 1793, which includes nearly the million contemplated, and carried the west line to the source of the Penobscot.⁹ Why the Committee should so essentially have added to the quantity, I cannot conceive.

However, on a view of all considerations that affect the subject, I have no doubt that you will induce them readily to accede to your ideas, relative to the quantity of 1,000,000 acres, and perhaps procure an abandonment of the interest that intervenes. These lands were purchased at too exorbitant a price in the first instance, of which the Committee must be well persuaded.

The payments that will be due on the contract will amount to ninety thousand dollars, which is a pretty large sum. But the most essential point, and which will require much of your skill in negotiation, is to get possession of the deeds, without paying the full amount of the money, which would absorb so very large a portion of what will be received for the lower tract, from Baring. Perhaps, if I would agree to anticipate the payments of the Kennebeck lands, and give them as security with my

⁹ This presumably refers to the survey of that part of the "back tract" which was done in the summer and fall of 1793. See Jackson to Bingham, Boston, 10 November 1793, in BP.

bonds as a collateral caution, they might renounce the deeds on the upper tract, as by these means they would be perfectly secure.

In your arrangements, it will be proper to attend to the Article respecting settlements and endeavor to modify it, so as to procure the number to be diminished and at the same time have the stipulated number to be dispersed over the whole tract, instead of forty settlers to each township of six miles square.

I wish that deferred debt could be taken instead of six per cent stock, which will equally well answer the purpose, as the interest is to be paid back to the proprietors, who lodge the same in the Treasury.

It may not be amiss, if it can be attended with any good effect, to mention that this property is about being placed in an active train of settlement, and that great inconvenience will result from placing any difficulties in the way.

I hope you will be able to procure the facility respecting the delivery of the deeds, on giving security. Otherwise it will employ upwards of 120,000 dollars (besides Barings payments), arising out of the monies received for the lower tract, in order to fulfill the engagement for this upper purchase, comprehending first cost, interest of three years and settling duties to be deposited. This would be highly inconvenient, as it would deprive me of the very resources for which the sale was made.

I observe that the Committee have had tracts located for masts, altho by the first Article, they are restricted from this privilege, except within two years from the 18 April 1792, the date of the contract.

If we should eventually agree on the purchase of the upper tract, it will perhaps become expedient to make a division of the concern in the same proportion as the lower tract, in order to simplify the connection, and place it on a similar footing with the remaining part, for the two tracts will be embodied together, and the monies expended on the improvement of either will have a relationship to the other, and to both conjointly, which renders it necessary to have an uniform system of management and the same proportion of property and profits.

Not that I shall have any objection to your taking any share of the profits made by the sale to Mr. Baring of the upper tract, in the proportions we have hitherto held. My idea only relates to the remaining object, in order to introduce a uniformity of arrangement.

If I should eventually be under the necessity of advancing the money for this tract, it will be highly inconvenient, and would be equally as agreeable to decline as to take. Without the previous sale to Baring, it would certainly have been adviseable to reject this tract, for it would with settle-

ment duties, interest etc. have amounted to nearly one third of a dollar per acre.

Having discussed the subject of the upper tract, as relative to the best mode of acquiring and possessing it, there remain some essential arrangements to be carried into immediate effect, with respect to the lower lands purchased of the State and of individuals. You will naturally feel the importance of these papers being forwarded with great despatch, as no title can be given to Mr. Baring until I am in possession of them:

1st. The deed from Gregoire, comprehending the quantity surveyed in Trenton and Mount Desert, with a copy of the deed conveying part of Trenton to Madam Leval, in order to ascertain the quantity to be deducted.

2d. Shaw's deed for the first purchase of Gouldsbrough, for which he received on account £200 lawful money.

3. John Lucas's deed for an eighth part of Chandlers township, amounting to about six thousand acres.

4. John Cabot's deed for eight thousand three hundred and thirty three acres of land laying in No. 7.

5. As the deeds for the lower Million and the six townships are now paid for, it will be necessary to become possessed of them, which cannot be done, as relative to one half of them, without depositing the amount of the settling duties, which for the two tracts will amount to 47,500 dollars, part in six per cent stock and part in specie.¹

General Cobb thinks that the 100 to be placed on the six townships in May 1795 are already there, but as he has no authenticated certificate thereof, I must I suppose, deposit the amount, except you can procure some substitute for these deposits, by giving security which will be equally available to the State, as it [is] very inconvenient to suffer such large sums of money to lay idle and unemployed.

6. Herewith you will find a power of attorney to General Jackson, to receive the deed for the six townships (Number 1), which you will please to have forwarded immediately. The last of the three bonds was paid the first of this month by General Jackson. That due the first February 1795 was likewise paid by him, both of which he is possessed of. That due the 1st February was paid by Mr. Russell, and transmitted to me. I now en-

¹ Bingham was to put 1,250 settlers on the Penobscot tract and 220 on the six townships. The contracts called for a deposit of thirty dollars a head in six per cent stock for the Penobscot settlers and forty-five dollars a head in specie for those on the six townships. Bingham's figure should have been \$47,400. See below, pp. 719, 744.

close it, as it will be necessary the three bonds, duly cancelled, in order to get possession of the deed, should be duly exhibited. You will observe that the receipt on the back of the last bond is dated the 8 February, whereas it should have been the 1st. This mistake I think was owing to a neglect of a post day, but it was corrected by Mr. Russell's settling with the Treasurer for the difference of interest, for the eight days that had elapsed.

Perhaps it will be most expedient to forward these papers, as they can be made ready, by some private hand, altho I do not think that much risk attends them by post. But it will naturally strike you as an object of the first consequence that no delay should intervene, as a very considerable sum of money must depend, with regard to payment, on the receipt of these essential papers.

When Mr. Baring and myself enter upon the subject of our monied arrangements, I shall not be unmindfull of your wishes,² which I hope there will be means of accomplishing.

He appears to be extremely well disposed and very ingenuous in his manner. It is impossible to have a more agreeable and I believe profitable connection.

I hope that you will be able with convenience to attend to all these points, as I find our friend the General is so much occupied with more important concerns that it is with great reluctance that I shall address myself to him again.

Herewith you will find Flints conveyance to me for the second purchase, which must be signed by General Jackson.³ You will likewise find my power of attorney to you, to act for me in this business with the Committee. Your progress therein I wish you regularly to inform me of.

I likewise enclose you the copy of the second survey of the Committee. Perhaps it may be possible to procure the million, extending from the river Penobscot to the Schoodyck, which would include better lands, and more eligibly situated than those extending so far northwardly. I would have no objection to suffer the three townships sold by the Committee to remain as they are.

I forgot to mention to you that what evinces the views and ideas of the Committee, as relative to the quantity of a million, is that the payments of the second contract are made precisely the same, as those in the first con-

² Knox was anxious to get a loan from Baring. There is frequent mention of this proposal below in this chapter.

³ This may refer to the contract for the six townships or that for the "back tract." In both cases it had been necessary for Bingham to get Henry Jackson and Royal Flint to make the contracts over to him.

tract, viz., 30,000 dollars per annum. Now 2,000,000 of acres at 10 cents amount to about the same sum, as 1,000,000 acres at 21 cents, and hence this uniformity in the terms.

General Cobb will leave this place on Thursday or Friday, and will be in Boston in the course of next week. I do not send you a copy of the contract, as I suppose you can procure it from General Jackson.

Believe me with affectionate esteem and regard
my dear General

Yours etc.

WM. BINGHAM

General Knox

*Bingham to Knox, Philadelphia, 13 February 1796 [KP]*⁴

My dear General:

Philadelphia February 13th 1796

I wrote you very fully by the last post and inclosed you a number of documents, which may be essential in negotiating the arrangements with the Committee.

I think it will be expedient to terminate this business as soon as possible, as well for the sake of giving satisfaction to Mr. Baring, as to prevent any additional difficulties occurring.

There is a report of a Committee of the House of Representatives on the subject of the disposal of the western lands, which fixes the lowest price for them at two dollars per acre.⁵

It is supposed that this report will be confirmed. This circumstance must soon be known at Boston, but I cannot decide how it will operate, as it will have two aspects, as relative to our purchase.

It will naturally impress the Committee with the idea that lands have procured a great additional value in the public estimation, and that the million of acres are low at the stipulated price of the contract. But at the same time, they must think, from the operation of the same reasons, that it will be highly expedient as it regards the Commonwealth, to diminish the quantity and confine it to one, instead of three millions of acres. Such an arrangement certainly must be pleasing to the legislature, and cannot but be equally so to the Committee, except as it may relate to the loaves and fishes, their commissions on the sale of a greater quantity. Perhaps Leonard Jarvis may have still more selfish motives operating on his mind,

⁴ KP, xxxviii. 130.

⁵ This report became the basis for the Land Law of 1796, in which the minimum price was set at two dollars per acre.

for as he may suppose that but a certain number of settlers will emigrate to the District of Maine, the smaller the quantity of land in an active state of improvement, the greater will be his chances of attracting them, on his settlements.⁶

In my last letter, I entered fully into a detail of reasoning on the subject of our claims on the Committee, since which I have found a letter addressed to them by General Jackson, and their answer thereto, relative to these points in contest, copies of which I herewith inclose you.

You will therein observe, that they advocate the Western Branch, as being the river Schoodick, whose source was never ascertained by actual survey. Now it is well known that all the maps of that day displayed with great precision that branch of the river and the lakes that were the source of it. They were known, at the time the Lottery Townships were surveyed. It is therefor folly to contend that this branch could be the river contemplated in the contract, when it is said that the eastern line shall be bounded by it, whereas no eastern line can touch it, except at the point of intersection. But on viewing the other as the projected river, the eastern line will be bounded by it, as the western line is by the Penobscot, or within six miles of it. This interpretation will alone reconcile the southern boundary to the terms of the contract, for then the southern line will naturally be bounded by my purchase below, to the full extent of that line. The Committee therefore must feel themselves embarrassed with this reasoning, and I think must therefore be disposed to make ample concessions. Perhaps, some hints thrown out, of the rising value of lands, and rather an inclination to embrace as large a quantity as possible, with the aid of European capitalists, may not be amiss.

In viewing the contract I do not find any engagement that authorizes the Committee to lodge the deeds in escrow, so as to forfeit the right to them, in case the amount is not punctually paid.

It is essentially necessary that the seventh Article should be materially changed.⁷ If the stipulated number of settlers cannot be lessened, at any rate it must be covenanted that they may be placed on any part of the land and not forty inhabitants on each township.

There may be some townships, so abounding in water, that it would be impracticable to procure the stipulated settlers, and if there is a deficiency in any one township, all the advantages, resulting from the exertions to

⁶ Leonard Jarvis, a member of the Massachusetts Land Committee, had sizable holdings in what is now Ellsworth and Surry. See *Bangor Historical Magazine*, VIII. 227-230.

⁷ The seventh article of the contract stipulated that forty inhabitants per township be placed on the lands purchased.

fulfill the contract in every other respect, would be entirely lost. It is an Egyptian punishment, compelling us to make bricks without straw. However the tenth Article modifies the seventh and appears to give a different interpretation to it, and will probably become the basis of the agreement, when carried into effect.⁸

The eleventh Article stipulates that the deeds shall be deposited in the hands of three persons whom the parties shall agree on, which are to be delivered by them, on the payment of the money.

But it does not require, that if the money is not paid at the very day the respective bonds are due, that the persons who hold the deeds shall refuse to deliver them, altho it is offered at a subsequent date. This arrangement was introduced into my final agreement, at the time it was terminating, when I was exhausted with opposition, and nolens volens.

At any rate, the Committee having received five thousand dollars on account of this contract, are bound to fulfill it, if we require them so to do. When they insisted on the payment, they supposed the terms too exorbitant to be complied with on our part, and that a forfeiture would ensue.

I do not think it will be proper to let it be known that Baring is concerned in any eastern purchases, untill the business is entirely completed.

With affectionate compliments to your family, in which Mrs. B. and the children join, I am with sincerity and regard

my dear General

Yours etc.

WM. BINGHAM

General Knox

Knox to Bingham, Boston, 15 February 1796 [BP]

My dear Sir:

Boston 15th February 1796

I have received your two favors of the 3d and 6th⁹ of February, enclosing your power to General Jackson to receive the deed to have been taken up last June, and your order on Mr. Russel for your bond, both of which I delivered and hope to have the papers required to transmit by this post. But if not, certainly by the next post.

I am indeed well satisfied to receive the information contained in

⁸ Article ten read as if the total number of settlers could be placed anywhere on the tract, not necessarily forty per township.

⁹ Presumably Knox means Bingham's two letters of 4 and 6 February, KP, xxxviii. 115 and 117. See above, pp. 670-672.

yours of the 6th, that Mr. Baring had made you the offers therein contained. I persuade myself firmly, that you will accept them although below your expectations, as the connection formed by this sale will be the great and certain mean of elevating the remainder.

An attention is now excited to these lands throughout all New England, and an emigration, of moral, industrious and wealthy citizens may by attention upon our parts be turned into the District, and upon our lands, which will surpass all other emigrations for value and multitude.

The number of settlers required by the contracts, nay more, say 5,000, settlers may be placed on the respective tracts, within the next three years, the present included. This is a primary object, and all others must give way to it, because it will beyond all other means:

- 1st. Increase the value of the other lands.
2. Enable the proprietors to avail themselves of money.
3. Render the proprietors popular with the Committee, the legislature, and the people at large.

Next to peopling the country is the cutting and making good roads. A road ought to be cut from north to south throughout the two millions east of Penobscot, and two or three main roads from Penobscot to Scoodiac and the Bay. After these great leading measures are adopted towns, mills, meeting houses, schools, etc. ought to be encouraged liberally. They will all amply remunerate the proprietors for all their expences. These measures being taken, your projects or plan of shares or actions [?] would in a short time raise the lands to 2, 3 or 4 dollars per acre.

I have no doubt, respecting the Kennebec tract, if you will go into the measure of erecting mills, and purchasing the falls below that tract, that you may raise and [*sic*] astonishing revenue, not short of 50,000 dollars per annum from the lumber only. The roads and settlement may go hand in hand with the mills. But it will require an energetic and faithful agent to be on the spot. Such can be found, for a proper price.

On the whole I regard the lands, in which you are so deeply interested, in the maine as susceptible of profit as any object whatever upon the surface of this globe, and with as great certainty. But it requires in the first instance, men, roads and money to illustrate.

I have communicated individually (but collectively) with four out of five of the Committee, being all but Mr. Phillips. Mr. Wells, Mr. Cony and Mr. Read are favorable to the idea of taking a million, or rather the first survey which I beleive was 12 or 1300,000 acres. But as they have been animadverted upon, and regarded by some members of the legislature with jealousy, they seem to think seperately that as they have be-

fore submitted the contract for the back tract to the legislature, so they must submit any proposed modification of it, although they are empowered to execute it as it stood. If we do not adhere to the old contract, and endeavor to get too many new terms or conditions, we shall loose it altogether, for a great and insurmountable objection will be raised in future to any large sale. Indeed they have not large quantities for sale—the part of the 2,900,000 acres out of the question.

Many townships have been sold to individuals who have not complied with the condition of settlers. Some measures are taking to ascertain this defect. It does not relate to us, although it is but candid in me to say that the payment of 30 dollars for each deficient settler will not in the public estimation be considered as any sort of equivalent. My constant theme is that you *will take efficient* measures to place the requisite number of settlers on the land and a great many more than the contract specifies.

I have been more particular on this point as I have conceived it possible that you and Mr. Baring may have thought that incurring and paying the forfeiture for non settlers would be satisfactory. But rely upon it, although this would be legal, yet [?] it would excite alarm and unfriendly sentiments to the proprietors, besides being directly opposed to their pecuniary interest. But perhaps by settling duties is meant the deposit of stock, so as to take up all the deeds. This is the construction I have put upon the terms used by you of the “settling duties.”

I shall endeavor with the Committee to obtain the deeds upon other security than the land, but I do not flatter myself with success. Perhaps we may obtain an explanatory clause that if the settlers are put upon any part of the back tract, they shall be estimated as if put upon the separte townships, provided they are in the ratio of forty settlers to each township according to the contract. I shall however attempt everything, but I doubt of accomplishing anything which shall be brought before the legislature which may look like more favorable terms to the proprietors.

You will understand explicitly, as I before wrote you, that the legislature is averse to selling any more land at present *even a single township*. They have now by a solemn vote refused to confirm the conditional sale to actual settlers from New Hampshire although they had agreed with the Committee for the price and terms of payment provided they approved of the land upon actual inspection. The committee of settlers were rather tardy in making this inspection, and therefore the legislature refused to confirm the sale. The little land left will, the legislature say, fetch a high and proper price in a few years, and the government do not at present want money.

The legislature will appoint commissioners to purchase the right of the Penobscot Indians. But it will not be sold but by express order of the legislature.

This dislike and opposition to the sale of more lands is a circumstance of high importance to us. We shall therefore have almost exclusively the lands of easy access for sale. I do not believe that, independent of what we may leave of the 2,900,000 acres that there are one million of lands in the District for sale by the State, which will attract the notice of settlers until *all* ours are sold. But if they *lock up* that million, we shall be the only sellers.

The only circumstance which mars in any degree the sale to Mr. Baring (for I take it for granted you have made it) is that it does not furnish you with the funds you require, and of course prevents or rather does not afford me also that relief which I hoped, and which my necessities forcibly require. Unless you can in some shape or other obtain from Mr. Baring the sum of 50,000 dollars which I mentioned to you I shall indeed be in great distress. If it could be had in no other manner than a loan (for 2 or more years) (upon his own terms of profit), perhaps it can be effected in that manner, hypothecating to him, the profits of 200,000 acres of my contract with you. You have this contract and could show it to him. I have an excellent estate in the Waldo Patent, which has almost obtained that degree of illustration as to be highly profitable, but not quite, and of course any *forced sale* of it would be an unjustifiable sacrifice on my part. I have made an arrangement of erecting mills, and other operations in the course of the present year, provided I can obtain the necessary funds for that and my other engagements which will probably afford me ample revenue. You have been so good as to be pledged for me payable

the 1st of May next	12,000 dollars	
1st June	<u>5,000</u>	17,000
Besides what my good friend Mr. Anthony is bound with me for money taken up 18 months ago for (payable in April)	14,500	
Mr. Hodgdon ditto	<u>3,115</u>	17,615
And I also owe in New York, payable in the same month		<u>5,100</u>
		39,715
		<u>2,300</u>
		42,015

And I have been informed by Mr. Meade, notwithstanding his en-

gagement to me when in Philadelphia, that he cannot pay the 2,300 dollars in April which he engaged to do to the Bank of Pennsylvania and about which you pledged yourself to Mr. Ingersoll,¹ making in all about forty two thousand dollars. The remaining eight thousand I should want for other purposes.

I have, my dear sir, made you this detail in the *strictest confidence*, and in order to ask your aid, in obtaining from Mr. Baring in some form or another 50 or even 60,000 dollars. It would be most acceptable for me to sell him part of my contract with you, but if this cannot be done, then perhaps a loan could be effected. But *at any rate*, and in any shape, permit me to rely upon your zealous and friendly *exertions*, which will be acknowledged with perpetual gratitude. You will have the goodness to see that my affairs are exigent and that the sooner you ascertain what can be done for me, the sooner I shall be releived from a painful anxiety.

Had Mr. Meades contract been executed, it would have provided for all, or nearly all, the sums now requested, which are in fact the arrears accumulated in public service, but of that nothing. I wish you not to mention the contents of this letter to Mr. Anthony *or any other person* whatever. I mention these things in confidence to you, because I am persuaded of your disposition to serve me, and because I hope an opportunity presents for that purpose, with Mr. Baring whose command of funds are very great. In serving me in this instance (with due sincerity and profit to himself and concern) he will enable me to serve him most essentially, for we are (I presume) all embarked on board of the same vessel, and if I contribute to give reputation to the eastern country, I shall benefit, in some degree or other, every other proprietor in that country.

The Georgia land speculation took deep root here and in the vicinity. The temptation [*sic*] of possessing great tracts of land upon the easy terms, of giving notes payable at very distant periods, was too mighty to be resisted. Accordingly [*sic*], multitudes rushed into the measure, and it is said that from 20 to 25 millions out of 30 rest this way. The purchasers are alarmed finding all other holders from New York and elsewhere crowding here to *sell out*. If this be a bubble, the people this way will feel it most severely.² I hope some events may occur by which they may be saved from injury. This circumstance will prevent my getting any funds here. New York is also extended as upon a rack of speculation. My main

¹ Jared Ingersoll, one of the leading Philadelphia lawyers of his day and the son of the Loyalist of the same name.

² For participation by New Englanders in the Georgia land speculations, see A. M. Sakolski, *The Great American Land Bubble*, 135-136. See also above, p. 608.

hopes therefore are confined to your influence with Mr. Baring.

General Jackson has just informed me that he cannot get the deed to go by this post. You will have them by the next.

I am my dear sir
with sincere respect and affection
Yours H. KNOX

The Honorable William Bingham

*Bingham to Knox, Philadelphia, 20 February 1796 [KP]*³

My dear General:

Philadelphia February 20 1796

I have received no letters from you since the last post. I cannot as yet determine whether any European exertions will be made concerning our Maine Lands. From the various conversations I have had with Mr. Baring, it seems his principal expectations are derived from the progress of settlements, promoted by the system we shall form for the purpose.

I wish you to keep me regularly advised of your associations with the Committee.

I think they will be well disposed to contracting the quantity at present and confining it to 1,000,000 of acres, as they will not wish to forego the handsome commissions arising out of such a sale: besides, the sum of money, that I suppose will not be dispensed with, will be a tempting bait for the Treasury. The contract specifies three payments that will be due in April, each of 30,000 dollars, and it is probable that I shall be under the necessity of paying a still larger sum.

With respect to the remaining part of this tract, I think it will be prudent to retain the preemptive right over it, which may be converted to profitable account, at a future day. Perhaps motives of personal interest may weigh with some of the Committee to accede to the arrangement, for, it appears, if we are divested of it, there will exist no right in them, to dispose of it to any other individuals or companies.

Altho Mr. Baring has thought proper to reject the Kennebeck tract, I have no doubt that a better price will be obtained for it, than what he was asked, for I think his preference and purchase of these lands will have a most excellent effect, in impressing a value on them, as well here as in Europe.

I shall expect the papers I requested of you as soon as conveniently they can be forwarded, as our ultimate arrangement, which I wish to complete, waits for their arrival.

³ KP, xxxviii. 135.

Monsieur and Madame Beaumetz passed thro this town in their way to Wilmington some days since.

With sincerest regard

I am yours etc.

WM. BINGHAM

General Knox

Knox to Bingham, Boston, 22 February 1796 [BP]

Boston 22 February 1796

My dear Sir:

I have received your favor of the 13th instant, and note its contents. Since my last to you on the 18th,⁴ I have had much conversation with the Committee individually and collectively excepting, in the latter capacity, Mr. Phillips, whose sickness and loss of his son, and other causes induce him to decline acting further with the Committee.

The result of all my conversations are, that the Committee have decided that they have no power to make the modification requested. They are not opposed, but rather favor the idea of confining ourselves to a million. But they say if a reduction of the quantity be made, the legislature alone are competent to the measure. A memorial signed by General Jackson will accordingly this day be presented for the purpose, and in the Senate I have no doubt it will be accomplished. The principal ideas [which] will be held up are: "That the quantity far exceeds the intentions or expectations of the parties at the time of the contract, as all the stipulations of payments were grounded upon a million of acres only. That the northern part of the tract lies in a region not ascertained to whom belonging, whether to the British government or the United States, nor can it be ascertained fully but by an actual line run by the consent of both parties.

That the company for whom the contract was made are willing to take a million of acres at the price then agreed upon with the boundaries modified according to the spirit of the contract, and therefore to request that the Eastern Committee may be empowered to make the modification accordingly. That at present they appear to conceive they are not authorised to make the modification proposed."

To the legislature it would be unnecessary to hold up any thing but general principles. It must be a committee to draw up the agreement in detail. The tract *ought* to extend to the Eastern Branch of the Schoodic, but

⁴ This letter, in BP, reports on Knox's negotiations with the Land Committee and his belief that they will be unable to modify the original contract.

I am apprehensive the Committee will be inflexible on this point, as they say a certain map in their room was the identical map referred to at the time of making the contract, and to which Jackson and Flint assented. This assertion of theirs appears to be confirmed by General Jackson. I will endeavor to obtain an alteration, but without expecting to obtain it.

The number of settlers will not be diminished and I am apprehensive we shall not be able to obtain a clause that settlers upon any part in the ratio of forty to a township shall answer for any part. In cases for tracts of water, to be sure, it may answer. I shall however push this point strongly being aware of the consequences.

The deferred debt will I believe be received as a deposit in lieu of the six per cent stock. The Committee seem to think this reasonable, but they decide against taking personal security either for the land or settlers. I did not mention your name—but undoubted security. I mentioned the Kennebec tract supposing it paid for, as a security for the back tract. They said they could not be justified in receiving what they have sold at 10 cents for that which they have sold at 21. Probably they would receive it in proportion.

It is a fact that the Committee are sore by the suspicions attempted to be thrown upon them by some members of the legislature. They are unconscious of having merited such treatment. But at the same time they are unwilling to give any possible pretext for further animadversions, and therefore they will not make any modifications of the back tract. Besides, they are indifferent whether the contract be or be not carried into execution, as the value of lands have risen so much. It is on this ground that they are not opposed, supposing they had the power, to relinquish all but a million or thereabouts—perhaps the first survey.

What shall be our conduct if the legislature decline making the proposed modification? I suppose a conditional contract with Mr. Baring ought to be entered into, to be carried into full execution when all the existing difficulties are adjusted.

General Jackson has no sort of objection of making the assignment proposed. But he conceives that he first ought to have the stipulated reward and which has been paid Flint, and also that he ought to be indemnified against the note of 5,000 dollars given to Tudor. It will therefore be proper that you transmit him your obligations to that effect. No time will be lost. The business before the legislature must be prosecuted in his name. It will have a better effect than if yours or mine were used directly. If the modification is effected, I will endeavor to get him to make the assignment which Flint has already signed.

With respect to holding the back tract in the same proportions as the first two millions, the idea is a new one. My disposition is to conform to your wishes in every reasonable proposition, and to make the whole speculation harmonious and profitable. If therefore you persist in this idea upon further reflection, and General Jackson will consent, I shall not feel disposed to mar this new arrangement. Knowing General Jackson's opinion that his intended compensation was by no means proportioned to his services compared with Flint, I have all along even from the commencement of the business assured him of his holding an equal part with me of the back tract, and of this I informed you in writing from New York.

General Jackson, in addition to his other affairs, is upon the grand jury and therefore he has not been able to get up the deeds. Indeed there is a material obstacle in the way. The bond paid by Mr. Russel, he says he transmitted to you. I mean the one paid last June.

The deeds of Gregoire's purchase and the one to La Roche of part of Trenton (not Madame la Val) are, according to his recollection, either transmitted to you or sent to be recorded. He thinks Lucas's, Shaws, and Cabots deeds are also with you or at the recorders.

I am mortified that he has not been able to furnish me with them, provided you have them not. I have and shall continue to urge him with respect to those of the six townships which are attainable. The 8th of February, instead of the 1st, may be obviated by the Treasurers testimony. Send the bond paid by Mr. Russel in June last.

Some little uneasiness has arisen in the Waldo Patent, about 20 miles distant from my house. It was excited by one Samuel Ely, a man who was concerned in an insurrection of shutting up the courts of justice in the year 1782, and then put under heavy bonds never to return into the Commonwealth again. He has been a sort of clergyman, the most factious scoundrel on the face of the earth. He was supposed about three months ago to be concerned in raising an armed mob, about 25 miles west of me, but not upon my lands. A warrant is issued to bring him here, when it is presumed order will be again restored. My people have no cause and shall never have any from me to complain of hardship or injustice. Of course, I do not feel concerned but what the present uneasiness will subside. If it should not, I am well assured that government will afford every requisite support. I mention this circumstance lest Mr. Baring may be alarmed if he should hear of this circumstance.⁵

Were it compatible with the negotiations with the General Court both

⁵ On Ely, see R. E. Moody, "Samuel Ely: Forerunner of Shays," *New England Quarterly*, v. 105-134.

as to the back tract, and a point in dispute about the north line of the Waldo Patent, I should probably repair to Thomaston in order to tranquilize every thing. But unless the thing grows more serious I shall not do it. I am also anxious to hear from you upon the subject of money concerning which I explicitly wrote you on the 15th instant, and to which I hope for a candid and friendly answer, as soon as possible. In your letter of the 10th of February you are so good as to say that when Mr. Baring and you enter upon your money arrangements you shall not be unmindful of my wishes which you "hope there will be some means of accomplishing." The sum I want will be nothing comparatively to him or his concern, and it will be *every thing to me*. But I cannot say more than in my letter of the 15th. I rest myself therefore entirely upon your kind exertions in my favor. I give you a carte blanche as to terms, only get me the money. If 60,000 dollars it would be complete.

God bless you and yours

H. KNOX

The Honorable William Bingham

Bingham to Knox, Philadelphia, 24 February 1796 [KP]⁶

Philadelphia February 24th 1796

My dear General:

I have received your favor of the 6th instant, and am pleased at the prospect of the papers which I wrote for, being forwarded by the next post, as they are much wanted in the final liquidation of our business.

I forgot to mention that it would be necessary to inform me of the exact quantity of land purchased from the holders of the lottery prizes,⁷ on which account General Jackson drew for 400 dollars, as I have engaged to convey one half of all that I possess, without the least reserve. If some more of these prizes could be purchased on low terms, they might be added to the quantity.

It gives me pleasure to find that you are satisfied with the arrangements I have made with Mr. Baring. You will observe, that the price of two shillings has not been obtained for one half of the lower Million, as I was compelled to place the lower townships and the private purchases, even Shaws city lots, on the same footing, which would, comparatively considered, form a considerable deduction from the price of the Million, when

⁶ KP, xxxviii. 140.

⁷ On the lottery prizes and the problem they created, see above, pp. 28-29.

taken singly and abstractedly. However, I have no doubt that the eventual advantages of this sale will be very great and it is a further consolation to find that however pressing our wants, I know no other purchaser that would give as much; indeed, no one that has an inclination to be concerned on any terms.

I hope the attention that has been excited to these lands, will continue and that the emigrations will be considerable in the course of the present year, to which object, all our efforts should be directed, as well for the reasons you mention, as for raising the value of the lands, as preparatory to any sales in Europe, if such should be thought expedient.

With respect to the proper measures to be pursued to raise the value of the Kennebec tract, they may be deferred, untill our excursion to the eastward in which Mr. Baring accompanies me. In the mean while, an arrangement should be formed which will prevent the depredations that may be committed on this property.

I observe that some difficulty exists on the subject of obtaining the quantity of a million of acres from the last survey. I think the Committee to be unwise, in submitting this business to the legislature, for as connected with 3,000,000 of acres, the contract is an absurd one and will do them great demerit, for the annual payments clearly designated about a million of acres which would amount (being double the price) to about the same sum as the first purchase, and therefore the annual installments are the same.

As the legislature is about breaking up, I am apprehensive that the business, if thought necessary to refer to them, will not have been finally arranged, which will be a great disappointment. As the temper of the members is known to be unfavorable to extensive sales, I am surprized that the Committee should hesitate in curtailing the quantity, especially as lands must, in the estimation of public bodies, be considerably enhanced by Congress being about to affix the price of two dollars to their western territory.

It would be better to close the contract for the million, on the terms specified in the agreement, than be under the necessity of submitting the points to the General Court, in order to obtain a deviation.

I think that I have so fully explained my ideas on this subject, that it will be unnecessary to add any thing thereto, as your prudence will regulate the business, by consulting our best interests.

What I mean by the settling duties, is the advance to be paid to the Treasurer on this account in order to obtain the deeds, which is to be funded with interest, when the settlers are placed thereon, but it must nevertheless be an advance of capital. With respect to obtaining the nec-

essary numbers of settlers, Mr. Baring is (if possible) more solicitous than I am.

I think you perfectly right in your determination not to push those points that cannot easily be obtained, either from the Committee or the General Court, for it would be unfortunate in creating an indisposition in either body to comply with the terms of the contract, or to withdraw their support from us, in the progress of the business.

As yet, I have had scarcely any conversation with Mr. Baring on the subject of funds, as I thought its introduction would be premature, being desirous of possessing the means of first giving him a title. The powers of those he is connected with are immense, and I hope he will have a proper command over them. His dispositions are good and I have cultivated them and hope to be able to turn them to good account, so as to serve your views and interests.

Untill the whole arrangement is compleated, it is impossible to tell what amount of funds will remain after possessing the necessary conveyances in order to give him a full and ample title, about which he is very particular—more so, than if he had been a longer time resident in the country.

The communication you have made to me, relative to your private engagements, shall be guarded, as an entire secret, and you may depend upon my making every friendly exertion, you can desire in order to obtain for you, the wished for accommodation. My wants are likewise very pressing. It is necessary that I should extinguish a loan I made in Holland, or else suffer the stock I deposited as a security to be sacrificed at the present low price. I have a considerable sum due at the bank and have Duers notes and an installment for the Kennebec tract to pay this year, both together amounting to 70,000 dollars, as the notes due in December last, are not yet paid.

If Mr. Baring had not absolutely rejected the Kennebeck tract, our wants might have been more fully supplied, but on this point, he was immovable. During his residence at Boston, he had many offers made to him of lands in Maine, on much lower terms than he has now purchased.

As the security that will be given him will be undoubtedly good, indeed unexceptionable, I think it very probable that I shall be able to negotiate the loan you wish. His house has an immense command of funds, which are laying unemployed untill the affairs of Holland are settled and will admit of their removal there.

I shall soon enter upon the discussion and shall in the meanwhile prepare his mind for the reception of the proposals I shall make him.

On this account, I am very desirous of having every point settled immediately, and the deeds made out and delivered to him, that I may know what will be my eventual situation, as relative to money matters.

The Spanish Treaty⁸ is arrived and I believe will have a very good effect, in weakening the opposition to the British Treaty. The reason you will readily surmise.

I am with the sincerest regard

My dear General

Your obedient humble servant

WM. BINGHAM

General Knox

*Jackson's Memorial, February, 1796 [KP]*⁹

To the Honorable the Senate and the Honorable the House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

The Memorial of Henry Jackson a Citizen of the said Commonwealth in behalf of himself and his Associates respectfully states—

That your memorialist in conjunction with Royal Flint, did on the eighteenth day of April one thousand seven hundred and ninety two, enter into a contract with the Committee for the sale of the unappropriated lands in the eastern parts of this Commonwealth, for a certain tract of land lying between the rivers Schoodic and Penobscot, the particular description of which will more fully appear by reference being had to the contract in the possession of the said Committee.

That it appears by the surveys which have been taken of certain lands supposed to be comprehended in the contract, that the quantity contained therein far exceeds the quantity contemplated as well by the Committee as your memorialist and his associates, for it will appear by the periodical installments contained in the said contract, that the boundaries mentioned were supposed would contain about one million of acres, whereas the surveys as executed contain nearly three millions of acres.

Your memorialist and his associates are desirous of executing the contract for one million of acres, at the price stipulated. But he and they hesitate to execute a contract for so much greater a quantity than was originally contemplated, more especially as the northern boundary extends into a region the jurisdiction of which is not ascertained between the Brit-

⁸ This was Pinckney's Treaty, whereby the United States gained the right to navigate the Mississippi and an entrepôt at New Orleans.

⁹ KP, xxxvii. 42. This memorial is not in Jackson's hand.

ish government and the United States. Nor is it presumed it can finally be adjusted until the lines shall be run and determined by the mutual consent of the two governments.

The Committee of the Eastern Lands, to whom application has been made for reduction of the quantity to one million of acres, appear to conceive that they have not a competent authority to comply with the request. Your memorialist therefore prays the honorable legislature to authorize the Eastern Committee to conclude an agreement with your memorialist, so as to reduce the above quantity to one million of acres or to thereabouts with a power to modify the boundaries and terms according to the true intent and meaning of the contract.

Knox to Bingham, Boston, 25 February 1796 [BP]

My dear Sir:

Boston 25th February 1796.

I have received yours of the 16th instant. I wrote you on the 22 that the Committee considered themselves as divested of all power to modify the contract in any of its essential parts, and that therefore application must be made to the legislature praying that the Committee may be authorized to that end. The Memorial signed by General Jackson has been presented, and committed to a joint committee of the two houses, who will probably report favourably this day, and if so, the high probability is that it will be accepted by the two houses. This business, so far as reducing the quantity to one million, will be soon terminated as it is probable the legislature will rise by the 1st of the next month. Your last idea of attempting to return the whole contract for a limited period, and executing now a million will be suggested either to the committee of the legislature or the Eastern Committee, as shall be most favourable. But it is very questionable whether it will be attempted. The lands in question (that is the back tract) are in very high reputation from the report of the surveyors. I have no doubt if we relinquish, that companies might be formed who would purchase upon the same extended credit of the government from 30 to 40 cents the acre, but the government will not sell at present. If roads are cut and 20 townships sold to men of capital in Connecticut, Rhode Island, New Hampshire and this State, the remainder may be pushed up very high. And I have very little doubt but that a dollar per acre may be obtained in the first instance upon a pretty extensive credit of five or six years. This (the credit) will be the inducement to men of capital or rather of respectable agricultural credit, to exert themselves to

form associations of settlers, to whom they will sell at an advanced price. The whole sale price of the land will thus soon be raised to the retail price and *no* time is to be lost as to the plan of settlements.

If the legislature should decline, it would be wise according to present appearances still to hold on the contract and, as in the case of Mr. Baring, to extinguish the debt for a million of acres. If hereafter the boundaries should approach the British line, a petition to the legislature will, without doubt, suspend or annul the contract for the doubtful region.

As to the Indian lands¹ no opinion can be had of the Committee or other persons in the legislature as to price. It is however probable they will be sold in single townships at pretty high prices. Some plan may be formed at the time of sale to purchase as many as we think proper, and we ought to purchase *many* of them, at any rate at which they will be sold.

11 o'clock A.M. I have this moment come from the joint committee of the two houses. I presume there will be no insuperable difficulty to agree to the proposition on their parts. The only difficulty that ought to exist, should be upon ours. This however is not very consistent with my former opinions, nor is it a very decided sentiment. I think you will have the opportunity presented of retaining the whole, or of taking the million—but *you will not be permitted to take one million now, and the residue to be optional with you hereafter.*

General Jackson is eight or ten hours daily upon the grand jury, which in addition to his other business overwhelms him. He has not therefore been able to make out the subordinate deeds. He is of opinion that you [have]

Shaws first purchase

Gregoire's purchase

Lucas's is at the eastward to be recorded. Cabot's is here and the deeds of the whole will be made out to you and transmitted, if possible, by the next post, and the transfer to you of the rest as soon as possible, that is as soon as he receives them. The deed to La Roche was about 14,000 acres, half for himself and half for Madame Van Berckel.

I am apprehensive that we shall not be able to affect the transmission of the deeds and bonds cancelled this post. We have surmounted the difficulty of the bond paid by Mr. Russel the 1st of June. But the difficulty of getting the escrow people together is great, from sickness, their own business, and no particular interest arising from the transaction. I shall

¹ These were the lands on either side of the Penobscot River above present-day Bangor which had been reserved for the Penobscot Indians and which were soon to come on the market.

however keep this letter open until the last moment of the post. The utmost limits have arrived, and no deeds and bonds. But as this is only a part of a whole, I hope no inconveniences will arise from this disappointment.

Yours affectionately

H. KNOX

Mr. Bingham

*Bingham to Knox, Philadelphia, 27 February 1796 [KP]*²

My dear General: Philadelphia February 27 1796

I have received yours of the 18th instant and much regret the omission in not enclosing to you the bond for 7,000 dollars, which was paid by Mr. Russell, it having escaped my recollection that he had forwarded it to me. You will find it herewith. This neglect will occasion considerable delay in making the final arrangements with Mr. Baring, as our discussions on the subject of the lands have entirely ceased for some time past, and will not be resumed untill the period of the execution of the deeds. I shall then warmly urge the various points concerning our monied arrangements, with a hope of being able to meet your wishes on the subject.

I am sincerely concerned at the Committee not having it in their power so to modify the contract, as to confine the purchase to 1,000,000 of acres.

They have already had two opinions on the subject of the quantity included in this agreement.

At first, they presented a survey containing 1,250,000 acres. The second survey was nearly three millions. I shall have no objection to taking the first survey and I cannot conceive any well founded difficulty can exist on their part, as it is probable they were as right in the first, as the second arrangement.

I cannot possibly reconcile the opposition of the legislature to selling in large tracts with the conduct of the Committee, or with the apprehensions you express as relative to the difficulty of obtaining from the legislature a modification that will admit of contracting the quantity. If either of the parties acted in consonance to their prepossessions of this nature, they would be desirous of annulling the whole or any part of the bargain.

If they could not effect the business to the full extent, they would eagerly grasp at the opportunity of doing it partially. Therefore I must confess that I am surprized at the Committee (under such a persuasion) not

² KP, xxxviii. 143.

being anxious to close with our offer of curtailing the quantity. If submitted to the legislature, it would be acting a very inconsistent part if they refused.

But, I am persuaded that by the provisions of the contract, we stand upon very high ground, and in making use of our advantages, we shall alarm the Committee, as well as the legislature. The former asserts that they are ready to carry into effect the contract on the footing it stands. Will they then agree to receive our obligations in such a form as to induce the payment of but 30,000 dollars per annum, which the contract expressly [*sic*] stipulates, and which part of the arrangement indubitably shows that there was never contemplated by the parties more than about a million of acres? This point would seriously alarm the Committee, if it was told them that arrangements had been taken to carry that Article into effect on the terms of the contract, when it was known that, contemplating the whole quantity, it would not amount to two thirds of the interest of the purchase money.

With respect to the legislature, it might be insinuated that if the real boundaries were adhered to, as expressed in the contract, the tract would include several additional millions of acres, and that a company could be formed with the greatest ease, that would embrace the whole quantity. In case they refuse a compromise, I do not suppose they would be averse to submitting our differences to some disinterested individuals to determine.

I wish you to inform me the contents of the Committee's letter to General Jackson, when they sent him the first survey of 1,250,000 acres, as I think this will throw some light on their opinions at that period.

Perhaps your situation may be somewhat delicate, as it relates to your interference in this business with the Committee. Should this be the case, it would be proper to employ an active intelligent person as an agent to transact the business with the Committee and to push matters as far as they could be carried. A law character would be the most eligible on this occasion.

I would not be so urgent on this point, if I did not observe a peculiar attachment on the part of Mr. Baring to be concerned in the upper tract as connected with the lower. He would most sensibly feel the disappointment, as I suppose him to have notified his friends in England, of the purchase. Besides, my indifference has very much diminished, since I have hopes of making an arrangement with Mr. Baring, by which there will be no necessity of an advance of money on my part, for I think I shall be able to persuade him to accept a conveyance for one half of the million, as

a security for his undivided half whenever the whole tract is paid for, he giving me an obligation that he will deliver the just mentioned conveyance, on receiving the second. In this case, I should make payment to the Committee, to the extent of one half of my obligations immediately by the right I have to anticipate, the means of doing which would be obtained from Mr. Baring. The other obligations might be reserved, untill they were, by the terms of our agreement, payable.

Perhaps a stipulation with the Committee that one half of the quantity we propose to take should be paid for in cash immediately would have a very good effect. This at least must, at any rate, be done. Perhaps it will be necessary to make a cash payment of the whole sum, but I am inclined to think the first arrangement will be preferred.

It certainly becomes expedient to make use of this circumstance as an inducement to operate on the minds of the Committee.

Would it not be proper to submit the business in its present state to Judge Sullivan, and by a generous *douceur* for his opinion, prepossess him favorably to our views?

If Mr. Baring would take the Kennebeck tract in the stead of the upper tract, I should prefer it, but I have no hopes, after the declarations he has made to me, of inducing him thereto. I do not think his powers extend so far as to admit of his embracing the whole of the upper tract, according to the quantity comprehended in the last survey.

I think it would be possible to form a company at New York or this place that would, in case the Committee persevere in their opposition, agree to take the excess, beyond one million, on the terms of our original contract.

This is certainly far preferable to purchasing Georgia lands at the immense price, that has been given for them, and which purchases, by recent accounts, will probably turn out a bubble.

At any rate, this business must be kept in a train of negotiation, untill we can avail ourselves of the opportunities that may offer of turning it to proper account.

I do not recollect any other observations that are at present necessary to make. I shall wait with anxious expectation for the result of this business, as it is, under the present state of it, connected in a very important manner with the management for the lower lands.

I am with much sincerity and affection

Yours etc.

WM. BINGHAM

General Knox

Bingham to Knox, Philadelphia, 2 March 1796 [KP]³

My dear General:

Philadelphia March 2 1796

I have to acknowledge receipt of yours of the 22d ultimo, and observe the result of your various conversations with the Committee. I am concerned at the apparent difficulties which attend a reference of the terms of the contract to the legislature, especially if that body should terminate their session, without coming to a decision on the subject. I am fully persuaded that the stipulation of the agreement by which it is determined that but 30,000 dollars shall be paid annually, as well on account of principal and interest, will seriously alarm them, as there is an entire incompatibility in the arrangement, by which the State must essentially suffer, if literally carried into effect. Indeed, there can be no doubt of my inclination to close the bargain upon such terms. Other objectionable points, as relative to the interests of the Commonwealth, may be likewise adduced, and what must operate on the minds of the Committee to whom the business will be referred and who will report accordingly. Indeed, it will be very surprizing that any demur should arise on the subject, if the General Court is averse to the sales of large tracts, or is sincere in its declaration of raising the price of the Maine Lands. I shall wait with much anxiety for the event of this application. If they should refuse it, there will be still a claim existing, which the State will find it difficult to exonerate itself from, and which must become the source of contention and protracted litigation.

I do not observe that you have any prospects of obtaining a reasonable modification on the subject of the intended number of settlers, altho you are inclined to believe that deferred debt will be taken instead of six per cent stock. I wish you to bring this point to a decision.

I wish the Committee were altogether well founded in their conjectures concerning the rise of the Maine Lands, for then there would be no difficulty in procuring a company which would agree to take the residue of the back tract, beyond the Million, and allow a profit thereon, whereas, I am much inclined to believe that more than first costs could hardly be obtained for it. If the legislature absolutely refuse their consent to the proposed modification, we must wait for a more favorable impression to be made on the minds of the next legislative body.

With respect to General Jackson's recompence, I supposed it would arise from your offering to let him participate in the share you hold of the

³ KP, xxxviii, 151.

speculation, he making no advances, nor coming under any security. Indeed, the sale to Baring of one half secures a very handsome profit, at the first outset, vastly more than any recompence to be given after the manner that Flint was settled with.

With respect to the note given to Tudor,⁴ I believe a conditional obligation must be given, to be paid in case that Tudor recovers of him. Perhaps it would be most expedient to settle with him, if he would agree to take a small consideration. It does not merit a large one, for even at this day, four years after the contract was formed, it would be difficult to find a company that would agree to fulfill the obligations that are stipulated, notwithstanding the great rise of lands in other parts of the United States.

You will please to write to me more particularly on this subject.

When I forwarded the conveyance that Flint had signed, in order to procure the signature of General Jackson, it was intended to have the title invested in me, in order to be enabled to grant you a power of attorney, to act on my behalf. If it had not been for the agreement made with Baring, I should have been very indifferent concerning the acquisition. My only views have been turned towards preventing others from possessing this property, so as to injure our first purchase by the competition.

I therefore was the more willing to run the risk of the 5,000 dollars which I first paid the Committee on account of this tract, in the month of January 1793.

Baring's wish is to make the two million acres a common concern, to be operated upon, by commencing settlements on the sea side and extending them northwardly. This was the principal reason, independent of my personal responsibility, that induced the idea of continuing the same interest in similar proportion, as it would otherwise occasion your share of the general expences to vary, being a third, as it relates to the lower tract, and one half of the upper, which would be eight twentieths and a fraction of the whole amount of the disbursements and other expences for the settlement and improvement. However, on this point, I am extremely indifferent.

I have none of the original deeds for any of the private purchases, and am extremely sorry that you have not been able to forward them. I have suspended all further arrangements with Mr. Baring until I am prepared to give him a compleat title, which I have engaged shall be shortly effected, as it relates to the purchases in the lower district, and which he is very importunate to receive, as he wishes to announce the circumstance to his

⁴ On Henry Jackson's note to William Tudor, see above, pp. 59-61.

friends in England. Having so confidently engaged it to him, I should exceedingly regret any disappointments that might throw a difficulty in the way. But there is a still stronger reason in favor of expedition, which is the interest on the money, whilst a delay in payment takes place, amounting in so large a sum to a serious object of consideration, and which I hope will urge General Jackson to make every effort. Should any of the deeds be at the recorders, it would be expedient to send an express for them. The deed for the six townships cannot admit of the least doubt, as it will be delivered on presenting the bonds. One of them will be retained, untill the deposits are made for the settlers.

I am most ardently desirous of having this business terminated. Not that I have the most remote suspicion of the integrity of Mr. Baring's views. But accidents may happen, and there is nothing to bind us, but sentiments expressed in letters that have passed betwixt us, as it was not thought necessary to have recourse to the formality of a legal contract, when it was expected the proper deeds might so soon be prepared and delivered. A great deal of low intrigue and management is making use of, in order to disgust him with these lands, that he may turn his attention to others differently situated. But, hitherto, I believe the attempts have been entirely unavailing.

I have forwarded to you by the last post, the bond for 7,000 dollars, which was paid by Mr. Russell, so that no impediment will now exist to prevent obtaining the deed for the last portion of the lower tract.

Baring had been informed of the agitation which existed in your neighbourhood, and the opposition which had taken place to the survey of some of the lands. I did not observe that he was very much alarmed on the subject. It should be quelled by making an example of the leaders of the insurgents.

It will become more essentially necessary that the most unremitting efforts should be made, in order to attract settlers from the different New England states, as Congress, by exposing the western lands for sale, connected with the free navigation of the Mississippi, recently obtained from the Spanish Court, as well as an entrepot at New Orleans, will occasion an immense emigration to the westward, which can only be counteracted by very assiduous exertions. I think it would be proper to disseminate a knowledge of the quality, situation and resources of these lands, thro' the different New England states, for I begin to be very much alarmed at the dispositions which will be created in favor of the lands on the waters of the Mississippi.

This country was never in so tranquil and prosperous a situation. All

its causes of dissension with foreign powers are extinguished. The delivery of the posts, cessation of Indian hostilities, free navigation of the Mississippi, and port at New Orleans, compensation for the spoliations of its merchants, etc. etc., are most fortunate events and will tend greatly to increase the attachment to the federal government and to render it respectable in the eyes of foreign powers. I have therefore strong hopes of such impressions being the cause of a considerable transfer of property to this country, and in such a case, I think the preference given by Mr. Baring to the Maine Lands, will turn to good account. I hope to hear by the next post what will be the decision of the General Court on the application of General Jackson. If a fortunate result cannot be confided in, it would perhaps have been better, not to have made the application.

But I suppose, by sounding the opinions of the most influential characters, a pretty correct opinion may be obtained, of what was to be expected.

Your affectionate friend

WM. BINGHAM

General Knox

*Bingham to Knox, Philadelphia, 5 March 1796 [KP]*⁵

My dear General:

Philadelphia March 5th 1796

It gives me pleasure to find by your letter of the 25 February, that there is a prospect of succeeding in the application to the legislature, to curtail the back tract and reduce it to 1,000,000 of acres, and that we shall probably have the option of taking this quantity or the whole amount of the last survey. I have proposed to Mr. Baring to make over to his concern in Europe, one half of the quantity of the surplus, on condition they would fulfill the engagements for the whole, paying them six per cent interest, whilst they lay out of their funds. But I believe, he has no power to make such a bargain, without a previous consultation with his constituents, to whom he means to write on the subject. But I am rather disposed to think that the delay that must necessarily intervene before he can procure an answer will be longer than the Committee will assent to.

It would perhaps be difficult to procure companies who would agree to purchase these lands at 30 to 40 cents, even upon so long a credit, considering that interest is accumulating during the whole period. I cannot conjecture what effect the sale of the western lands will have on those of the eastern territory. The price which Congress has fixed is two dollars per

⁵ KP, xxxviii. 157.

acre at least, and as much more as can be obtained, at public sale. It is expected that these sales, connected with the free navigation of the Mississippi, will cause a very great emigration to the westward. It will be our interest to make the most unremitting exertions to counteract this disposition, and to create as extensive an influence as possible to favor and support our measures. We shall lose no time in digesting other arrangements to produce a rapid and thick settlement. Mr. Baring has the matter under consideration, and we shall soon write to General Cobb on the subject. I have not heard from him since his departure from hence.

I shall have no objection to the Indian lands being sold at high prices, as the consequence will inevitably be, to raise the value of the adjacent property. It ought to be most forcibly impressed on the Committee and the General Court, that it is absolutely necessary to dispose of the lands in the neighbourhood of the Penobscot, as the surrounding country can never flourish, untill these townships, which are the key to the District, on both sides of the river, are settled. If they sell at high prices, so much the better and I shall have no objection to making some considerable purchases of them.

I detailed in my last letter the various reasons that urge the immediate forwarding of the papers which are requisite, to exhibit to Mr. Baring a title to the property he has purchased.

It is not only the loss of interest on the amount, but the unpleasant situation of protracting for such a length of time so important a business. I forgot in my last, to inclose you the Treasurer's receipt for 5,000 dollars, which was the first payment for the six townships, and which is necessary to exhibit at the time of receiving the deed for this purchase. You will please to return me, this and the other papers and documents transmitted to you.

General Jackson has, I find, been too much employed for some time past, to attend to this affair, which I regret very much. He is mistaken in the supposition that I have the deeds for Shaws first purchase, or Gregoire's. These deeds must have been made to him, and from him transferred to me. You will essentially oblige me in attending to the business, as General Jackson is probably too much occupied, to give any attention thereto.

What will Shaw agree to take for the last purchase made of him, on paying cash, instead of having a long credit? Perhaps a deduction of thirty per cent may be obtained, if he has occasion for the money. You can negotiate the business on the best terms, and inform me of the result. I imagine some little finesse must be used in the business.

The Spanish and Algerine⁶ treaties have given very general satisfaction, and I believe will be the cause of bringing the British Treaty into vogue, especially amongst the western people.

The Georgia business has occasioned a great deal of clamor. The law has been absolutely repealed,⁷ and the claims of the Bostonian speculators must be greatly depreciated in value.

With sincere regard and friendship

Yours etc. etc.

WM. BINGHAM

General Knox

Knox to Bingham, Boston, 7 March 1796 [BP]

My dear Sir:

Boston 7th March 1796.

I have received your favor of the 27th ultimo, and the bond of 7,000 dollars paid by Mr. Russel last June, which is not wanted, as the deeds were taken up by virtue of a certificate from the Treasurer, and forwarded to you by the post of the 29th ultimo. I therefore now return it you.

Every exertion was used on my part with the Committee to induce them to give, or to agree to give, deeds for a million now, and refer the other part for further discussion and decision. But all my arguments were in vain. The legislature had revoked their powers, and no argument, not even the value of the whole tract, would have induced them to act otherwise than they did. As I before wrote you they were convinced, that the interests of the State required that the sale should be limited to a million of acres, and they uniformly and strongly persisted in declarations to this effect. Upon bringing the matter before them at first, they seemed to be of opinion that the whole affair had dropped and that we should relinquish the whole. Had the House of Representatives understood the state of the case as well as the Eastern Committee and the Senate, our request would have been complied with, and I think to our cost. The Committee did indeed offer General Jackson the first survey of 1,250,000 acres in a letter which he never answered in writing, but told the Committee verbally that the party concerned demanded the whole quantity according to contract.

⁶ By this treaty, which had been negotiated the previous year, the United States purchased peace with the Dey of Algiers.

⁷ A new Georgia legislature had repealed the land grants made the year before by their corrupt predecessors. This led to the case of *Fletcher vs. Peck*. See A. J. Beveridge, *The Life of John Marshall*, 111. Chapter x.

As to extending further east, we have no right by contract. The western branch of the Schoodic on which our survey is bounded retains the name. The eastern branch is called the *Passamaquuddi*. From a report which I have seen of a committee of the legislature in 1762 signed "Thomas Hutchinson," afterwards the governor, I am apprehensive the western branch will be considered the line between Great Britain and the United States.

If Mr. Baring has a certain blue covered manuscript book which I lent you, and which Major Jackson took to Europe, you will find the above report. I wish to have that book returned, as there are therein some important documents respecting my estate.

I have no doubt but that a company would be formed in Philadelphia, New York or this place who would take up the remainder beyond a million on the terms of the contract, availing themselves of the benefit of your payments. If you choose, I will as soon as I receive your definitive orders upon this head attempt something. But at this moment the Georgia business (which is and must in its present course ever prove a *bubble*) has rendered people here timid, but that deception will soon render the people here more susceptible of riches nearer home. The idea gains ground daily, that they have been fools to suffer such a treasure to pass out of their hands, and that now every exertion ought to be made by the capitalists to possess as much of what remains as possible.

I have found no restraint in negotiating with the Eastern Committee, or the joint committees of the two houses, although it was conceived proper that the ostensible applicant should be General Jackson.

My judgment is still that if Mr. Baring would be concerned, that it will be best to carry into effect the whole contract for the back tract, making certain stipulations cautionary against approaching the British lines on the north. The whole, with the reservations deducted, will not amount to more than *two millions and an half of acres*. Perhaps it will be possible so to arrange the business as not to give bonds for more than one million and an half until the line shall be run, and settlers in proportion.

General Jackson did not buy more than one or two thousand acres of the lottery prizes. They cannot now be bought low. Mr. Barrell⁸ has ten thousand acres of these prizes, located he says in two tracts or townships, the numbers of which he did not recollect. He asks a dollar an acre for them, but has offered them in England. I mentioned half a dollar. He

⁸ Joseph Barrell, merchant, of Boston, had purchased some twenty tickets in the land lottery of 1786. See Lottery Book in the Massachusetts Archives, a copy of which is in BP.

may perhaps listen if they should not be sold in England. But suppose he should be willing to sell, would it be for our interest to purchase him out? Perhaps he might be induced to improve and thereby enhance the other lands. I will further investigate the number of prizes and the quantity of acres and let you know.

I hope in God the procrastination of the contract for the upper tract will have no effect upon the lower million. The contract is secure in some shape or other. If Mr. Baring and you think proper upon further reflection to decline to take the whole, and no company should offer to take it, the legislature will certainly at their next session, complete the relinquishment of all but the million—and they would gladly embrace that too.

I am very anxious that you and Mr. Baring should decide as early as possible upon the train or course you intend to pursue to enhance the value of these lands. No time is to be lost. You may now by vigorous and wise measures render your lands of any value you please by settlements and roads. They ought not to be suffered to languish longer. All New England may be attracted there. I mean the surplus inhabitants who will emigrate somewhere. But there must be a system for this business pursued steadily, and every good effect will follow.

I have written you so fully respecting my pressing demands for money, that it is unnecessary for me to say a word more on that subject. I hope you will speak to my friend Anthony and give him some assurance. I will write him next post.

Your obliged and affectionate friend
H. KNOX

The Honorable William Bingham

*Bingham to Knox, Philadelphia, 8 March 1796 [KP]*⁹

My dear General:

Philadelphia March 8th 1796

I have received your favor of the 29 March [February]. I observe that the joint committee have reported favorably on the subject of the application to the legislature for a modification of the contract, with respect to quantity, and that the Senate had sanctioned the report, but that the House had postponed the consideration thereof, untill the next meeting of the legislature. Under these circumstances, I find you are inclined to form a company, to fulfill the terms for the surplusage beyond a million

⁹ KP, xxxviii, 162.

of acres, but you are not decided on the possibility of effecting the same. With the present appearances, I think it will be most advisable to suffer the business to remain in *statu quo*. An objection lays to a company who would be admitted on the same terms, as they would be competitors in attracting settlers and thereby injure us. Whereas, if the land should revert to the State, it will probably be withheld from the market for a considerable period, and when sold, would command a much higher price, which appears to be the present disposition of the legislature to require.

I have made an offer to Mr. Baring, that if he would fulfill all the stipulations of this contract, for the excess, beyond a million, that he should have one half thereof, at the first cost. I am convinced that he would not hesitate a moment in accepting the offer, if he was fully empowered. He has wrote to Europe on the subject, but it is questionable whether he can possibly receive an answer in time to avail himself of the opportunity. But I am by no means pledged to wait for such a decision. Such an arrangement would be highly advantageous, as it would tend to our mutual interests, and be far preferable to the other mode of disposing of this property.

Mr. Dane is certainly correct in his opinion of the contract and its obligations. No more than 30,000 dollars can ever be paid in any one year.

But on viewing the eleventh Article, as connected with the third, it will be found, that on the payment of the 30,000 dollars, no deed for any specific quantity of land can be delivered, for the 11th Article has a reference to the extinction of the whole debt, by the payment of these installments, which cannot be ever accomplished, for the interest will accumulate the debt, more than the annual installments will reduce it, so that there will be a continual augmentation, and consequently no possibility of determining what proportion of the tract contracted to be sold, is to be conveyed, which is to answer to the payment of the fifteen thousand dollars mentioned in this Article, for the amount of all the bonds with interest can never be ascertained, as they will be increasing ad infinitum.

Therefore this plan must absolutely be abandoned (if the 3,000,000 acres are taken) as being impracticable, which clearly evinces that the quantity far exceeds what the parties originally had in contemplation. However, as this business will not be arranged untill June, we shall have time to consider and determine, as our best interests may require.

Even if the payments, each year, of 60,000 instead of 30,000 dollars are substituted in order to accommodate the additional quantity, then the whole amount according to the operation of the 11th Article will not be extinguished until the year 1808, and the payment of each installment of

60,000 dollars will only entitle us to a deed of 193,548 acres, admitting the whole quantity to be 3,000,000 acres, except the deeds were taken up by anticipation of payment, which would make the difference of the interest. A rough calculation which I enclose will show you the operation.

I can scarcely think it prudent to give bonds for nearly a million of dollars, and at all events to pay 60,000 dollars per annum, or run the risk of the lands which the payments represent.

Besides, it would be difficult to find a person whom the Committee would approve, to become security, by entering into joint bonds, for one fourth of so large a sum.

If it had not fortunately happened that Baring and Hope were favorably impressed with these lands and agreed to speculate in them, I do not know where we could have found any monied resources by the sale of them, and I now know that the great inducement was the preference which they supposed due to the connection which they were about forming. Mr. Baring was much staggered, for a considerable time after his arrival at Boston, which is not wonderfull, considering the general opinion entertained of the eastern lands in that city. The truth is, but few persons are interested in puffing these lands, and many find it to their advantage, to undervalue them. What effect, the sale of so much western territory will have is a question which experience must decide.

Independent of the profits that may arise, I am convinced that the purchase made by Mr. Baring must have a very favorable effect by bringing into notice, and raising the value of the Maine Lands.

I have made a conditional bargain with Mr. Baring for 500,000 acres of the upper tract, but he will be impatient to get possession of the deeds. However, I hope that I shall be able to reconcile him to the delay.

I have received the two deeds from General Jackson. I am fearfull that I shall be compelled to the purchase of six per cent stock, in order to make the necessary deposit, for the purpose of liberating the reserved deeds.

A sufficient number of inhabitants are on the six townships to satisfy the stipulations of the State for the year 1796. But unfortunately this business has been neglected. No arrangements have been made with the Treasurer, relative to the nature of the proof he will require, of these settlements being made, nor has any calculation been made of their number, altho by a return of Mr. Peters's, made many years ago, there was at that period nearly one hundred.

This business ought to be negotiated with the Treasurer, on a liberal footing. But I am inclined to believe that, from General Cobb's not having any authenticated return, I shall be under the necessity of depositing

the certificates for a number of settlers that it is well known are now resident on the spot, which is not very agreeable.

I wish you would ascertain decidedly whether the Treasurer will receive deferred stock, as I must shortly begin the purchase of the necessary quantity, in order to make the deposit and free the deeds.

It would be very agreeable to me, if the Treasurer would explicitly agree to this proposal, which is consonant to the terms of the contract, as it would require less expenditure of money in the first instance, and no trouble in the quarterly receipt of interest.

General Jackson mentions that if Shaws deed of the first purchase, the deed for part of Chandlers River township and the deed for De Gregoire's purchase are not with me, they must have been forwarded to the eastward, in order to be recorded. The latter then must have been the case, for they have never been sent to me. I wish some steps to be taken in order to procure them immediately, as Mr. Baring is very particular on these subjects.

The lottery prizes that were purchased I wish likewise forwarded, as I want to compleat the whole business at once.

I have wrote to General Jackson about Shaw's purchase, to know whether any considerable deduction will be made for the payment of cash. His terms, I think extravagantly high.

I am well pleased with your subscription to a bridge¹ over Kennebeck, which I think will be advantageous to our property and will probably produce an interest for the amount.

Mr. Baring has taken the matter under consideration.

You will oblige me in taking the trouble of having the titles to the private purchases examined, and a brief of them forwarded to me, with a sound legal opinion of their legality, in case of any apparent difficulty existing on the subject.

I herewith inclose you an account, taken in a hurry, of the payment made on your drafts. If there is any mistake, please to correct it.

I am with sincere regard and affection

my dear General

Your obedient servant

WM. BINGHAM

General Knox

¹ This was the bridge at what is now Augusta, completed the following year.

*Bingham to Knox, Philadelphia, 11 March 1796 [KP]*²

Philadelphia March 11th 1796

My dear General:

I have received your favor of the 3d instant. With respect to the benefit we may derive from the lands attached to the lottery prizes remaining in the hands of the present possessors, I do not count much upon it, as they cannot get possession untill the surveys are made, and therefore cannot attend to the improvement of them.

I fully concur with you in opinion, relative to the necessity of making the most unremitting exertions, with respect to improvements of all kinds, in order to obtain settlers. I believe Mr. Baring possesses the inclination as strongly as I do.

I am not of opinion that you would find it so easy to form a company to take up the back tract, detached from the million to satisfy our contract. It would be composed of two millions of acres, and it would require annual payments of forty thousand dollars, in order to sink the principal and interest within any reasonable time. Three payments are now due by the contract, which would make one hundred twenty thousand dollars to be paid immediately before signing the conveyances, which in the present scarcity of money you will find few people able and willing to advance. By the calculation I sent you, it appeared that annual installments of sixty thousand dollars would be required to extinguish the principal and interest of the whole three millions of acres, untill the year 1808. Near two hundred thousand dollars must now be paid if that contract for the last survey was carried into effect. If the million acres were separated, they would cost us 25 cents with interest that has accrued and without the settlement forfeitures.

Mr. Baring would not pay more than 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ cents per acre for what he purchased. Is it reasonable to suppose that lands so much more remotely situated, could be sold at nearly this price, when persons who possess such enormous capital could not be induced to exceed it?

Indeed we were without much prospect at one period of selling these lands on any terms to Mr. Baring. From his first impressions, after many enquiries made at Boston, he has informed me that he wrote to his friends that he should absolutely decline any concern in them, such were the unfavorable accounts he received from the people of Boston.

If he had not engaged in the purchase, I am convinced that we should have found it difficult, if not impracticable, to have obtained any monied

² KP, xxxviii. 166.

resources from these lands, whatever may be their intrinsic value. Lands to the southward and westward are daily getting into more repute, and the quantity at market will be immense, all which will tend forcibly to attract that portion of the capital which can be spared from more pressing purposes. Even the Bostonians, who had been always averse to land speculation in the District of Maine, seized eagerly upon the opportunity of purchasing southern lands, when they offered, which I suppose they exultingly contrasted with the Maine Lands.

From these, and various other reasons, I am inclined to think that it would not be so easy to form the company you allude to. It is certain that no lands have increased so little in value as the Maine Lands, nor are there any which it would be so difficult to command money for, owing to their being a less current article in the market. I therefore believe that the proposals I made to Mr. Baring, to convey to him one half of these lands on condition of his fulfilling the contract for the whole, is the best arrangement that can be made, for I think all others would be illusive.

On reflection, you will observe your mistake relative to having no more payments to make, in less than three or four years. You do not consider that three payments are already due and that they must, from the nature of the case, be so large as to nearly absorb the amount of the first million. And I think you are wrong with respect to their doubling in value in such a period. Their price must depend on the quantity at market, and the amount of capital to represent them. The former is immense, the latter has such active objects to employ it that fewer people are inclined to speculate in lands.

If the boundary of the State should be determined to be the river, east of the Schoodick, it will bring an immensity of more lands into the possession of the State.

I observe the period when your engagements will fall due. I have not as yet mentioned the loan to Mr. Baring, as I think he will be much better prepared for the purpose, when the conveyances are ready to be delivered to him. All that has been determined is the payment at the par of exchange, which I insisted on, but obtained with much difficulty, as it was then at 60 per cent and below it. In order to effect this, I agreed to give credit to Mr. Baring untill the latter end of April or the beginning of May, in order to give him time to make his arrangements.

I will candidly exhibit to you my present situation, as relative to the command of funds and claims I have upon me.

The settlement forfeitures on the two purchases in the lower tract will be	<i>Dollars</i> 47,400
I owe the bank and others which must be paid previous to my excursion to the eastward	45,000
Duers notes due in December last and not paid, and three which will fall due in the course of the present year amount to	38,000
Installment due on the Kennebeck tract to be remitted in May, as it is payable the 1st June	30,000
Loan made in Holland, which must be paid immediately or the stock which I deposited as security will be sacrificed	100,000
	<u>260,400</u>
To carry forward the purchase of the back Million, in order to take up the deeds and give Mr. Baring a perfect title in case no other arrangement can be made with him, will require, with settlement forfeitures, exactly	300,000
	<u>560,400</u>
I shall receive from Mr. Baring for the lower tract (deducting Van Berckels claim) and subordinate purchases about £53,000 sterling, which is about \$235,000 from the upper tract about £37,500 sterling, is	166,000
	<u>401,000</u>
	\$159,400

You will observe by this calculation the deficiency that will arise, and that so far from having funds at my command, I shall be very much behind hand in the means of fulfilling my engagements. I shall be more able to determine with precision the full extent of my situation with respect to the command of funds as soon as Mr. Baring and myself make our ultimate and final arrangements.

Previous to this period of making the bargain with Mr. Baring, such was the situation in which I was placed, that I had made overtures to Mr. Gilmor of Baltimore,³ to dissolve a connection which was exceedingly profitable, in order to have the command of the funds which I had invested in his establishment. On our agreeing to terms, I notified to Mr. Gilmor that the commercial connection might continue untill the ex-

³ For Bingham's relations with Robert Gilmor of Baltimore, see M. L. Brown, "William Bingham, Eighteenth Century Magnate," *Pa. Mag. of Hist. and Biog.*, LXI. 399-403.

piration of the time originally allotted, and that he might make his arrangements accordingly.

So that this resource can no longer be counted on. You may be assured that I will make every possible effort to aid you in the payment of your obligations, and I hope to be able to obtain the loan from Mr. Baring, to the extent of what you require, as I shall not decline my credit to facilitate the object. I have not at my command to the amount of 2,000 dollars of funds or bank stock except what is pledged in Holland for the loan. All my resources must come from the sale of lands, and I am now making every effort to dispose of part of those which I have in Pennsylvania. If I succeed, I will most readily furnish you with the assistance you may at present require.

I think Baring's purchase will tend to give a great additional value to the Kennebeck tract, and as soon as the titles are compleated I shall seriously attend to the sale of this property, or a considerable portion thereof. Your wants and my own both essentially require it.

I have had a conversation with Captain Anthony on the subject of the debt in which he is engaged with you. I find it is a bond due to McMurtrie.⁴ It is not common to exact such rigid and punctual payment of a bond as of a note, but in this case, no dependence can be placed on the forbearance of the creditor. I shall be happy to join with him or Mr. Hodgdon, in making the necessary arrangements, and shall make every exertion in my power. I lament that I have no command of active funds, but I am as destitute of them, as any person in the Union and from the view of the statement I have made above, you will find that Mr. Baring's purchase will not furnish me with any great resources. I procured a discount for near 3,000 dollars at the bank yesterday, in order to aid Colonel Hodgdon, in taking up some of your paper. He wrote me that he should be under the necessity of discounting my acceptances due in June, at the exorbitant premium now demanded for paper that has some time to run.

I hope in a few days to be able to bring Mr. Baring to a settlement for the lands contained in the Penobscot tract, except that the want of the reserved deeds should be an obstacle. However, on giving my obligations to furnish them within a limited period, I hope to overcome this obstacle.

I am determined to make every sacrifice to free myself from the embarrassments I have lately been placed in, as it is extreme folly on any consideration of profit, to continue in such a situation.

⁴ There is a William McMurtrie listed as a merchant living in Philadelphia in the census of 1790.

I shall write you shortly again, on the subject which so immediately interests you. You may depend on every exertion of friendship to serve you.

I am with sincerity

Yours with affection

WM. BINGHAM

General Knox

Knox to Bingham, Boston, 17 March 1796 [BP]

Boston March 17th 1796.

My dear Sir:

I have received your favor of the 8th instant. I am well satisfied that you decide to suffer the back tract to remain as it is, and not to permit any other company to interfere therein. If in any event, the surplus of a million should be returned the State, they will not I am persuaded sell again in such large quantities. There would have been no difficulty with the Committee had they had the powers. Nor will there be any with the next legislature. Mr. Wells assured me the quantity would not exceed 2,500,000, as the contract stood. I am inclined to believe the Committee might, were they so empowered, close the contract at two millions, if you choose, or at one as you should think advisable. But they are [so] disgusted at the treatment they have received from the legislature that they will do nothing without the most perfect authority.

If Congress adhere to the price of two dollars for their western lands, at such a distance from New England, there can be no doubt, if you sell *twenty townships first*, conditioned upon their placing a number of settlers thereon, which our contract requires, giving credit for several years, say six, and the two first without interest, that you would interest the greatest part of New England to push up the price of the lands *equal to your most sanguine expectations*. Then there might be a little speculation mixed, or rather raised upon a solid foundation. At present there is no encouragement. The State have no lands but those very remote, and these they have locked up. Ours ought to be for sale to the extent mentioned, and moving or travelling agents appointed for the purpose within New England. Pray send a number of the maps. Let us begin aright—encourage settlers in the manner I mention, at a dollar per acre. This may be as well obtained as a less price. Cut roads, build a few houses in Gouldsbrough, at the head of the tide on Penobscot River, which might be purchased for that end, and at the head of the tide on Schoodick, all within the compass of 25,000 dollars, and up go your lands to a price which you do not now contem-

plate. This operation will also make the speculation popular. As to the Kennebec tract, the falls below the Million ought to be ours *at any price*. Mills ought to be erected there systematically, and you may annually derive a revenue exceeding the cost of the fixed capital. This department ought to be put under an energetic agent resident upon the spot. We shall never find another Cobb, but we may find a man who will give you great satisfaction.

I will see the Treasurer upon the idea of receiving deferred debt in lieu of the six per cents, but you must not for a moment indulge the expectation. He is a responsible servant and cannot depart a particle from the contract.

Shaw at present seems disinclined to any reasonable commutation of the terms of the contract. He mentions absurdly 5 per cent deduction. Unless he makes thirty, he ought not to be listened to.

General Cobb, who is here, says he has Gregoires deed at Gouldsborough and that no person can get at it but himself. The others are written for.

The titles of the private purchases shall be examined as you require, and a brief forwarded to you.

You will not be able to purchase any lottery prizes under one dollar. Will they not serve to raise the price of the other lands? A man at Springfield has 3,000 acres but I do not believe he would take 2 dollars per acre.⁵ I find Barrells 10,000 acres are not in our purchase. I will speak and urge General Jackson to send on any prizes he may have. I have written so repeatedly and urgently, upon my personal concerns, as would be justified only by the most perfect confidence in your friendship.

Yours sincerely

H. KNOX

Bingham to Cobb, Philadelphia, 23 March 1796 [CP]

Dear General:

Philadelphia March 23 1796

I have not had the pleasure of hearing from you since your departure, altho General Knox informed me of your safe arrival.

The season is now approaching for the commencement of active operations, which I hope will be attended with brilliant success.

⁵ This may have been Jonathan Dwight of Springfield, who is listed as one of the winners in the lottery. See the Lottery Book in the Massachusetts Archives, a copy of which is in BP.

From the conversations that we held on the subject of improvements, roads, etc., you will be at no loss to know in what manner to act, untill Mr. Baring and myself have reduced our ideas to system. We shall certainly have the pleasure of seeing you in the summer very early.

In the mean time, should any difficulties occur relative to the settlement, you will consult General Knox, in case you wish another opinion, in aid of your own judgment. These lands are rising much in the public estimation and I am convinced that no difficulty of a serious nature will exist, to prevent their most rapid improvement. Some few townships being sold, the demand for others will rapidly increase. The price at which Congress are about fixing their western lands will have an immense influence on the value of all property in the vicinity of the thick settled states, which I hope will facilitate our views in procuring handsome prices for the townships to be sold in the course of the present year.

I herewith inclose you a power of attorney⁶ for the general superintendence of this property. A more ample authority, embracing all the objects that will be necessary, must be given by Mr. Baring and myself conjointly. This will be done, as soon as we have established our plan on principles and system.

I wish you to furnish me an account of the various disbursements that have been made on account of these lands, from the commencement of your operations, untill you left Philadelphia the last time, which was the period when Mr. Baring will be debited with his proportion. Your expences on your return will be charged to a new account. You stand charged with the various drafts passed by General Jackson and yourself, and in order to give you credit, these disbursements must appear in your favor.

I must now pay a particular attention to the regularity of our accounts, as Mr. Baring is very desirous of preserving the greatest order in the business, which you might suppose from the habits of his commercial life.

Should I have occasion for a quantity of lumber (boards and scantling), at what rate do you suppose it could be delivered at, and at what price could you charter a vessel of about seventy tons to make a voyage to this place? She would probably procure articles here that would pay a back freight.

I am with great regard

Dear General

Your obedient etc.

WM. BINGHAM

General Cobb

⁶ This power of attorney is in CP.

Knox to Bingham, Boston, 24 March 1796 [BP]

Boston 24 March 1796.

My dear Sir:

I have not received any letter from you by the last post.

I wrote you that the Treasurer could not make any alterations so as to receive the deferred debt in lieu of the six per cent stock. It is highly probable Shaw would make a deduction of 25 per cent from the capital sum for prompt payment. This indication has been made by him to General Jackson. If you should authorize this measure, it may be tried.

You will perceive by the public papers the news, brought by the recent arrivals, of the tendency of measures in Europe to a peace. The state of affairs in England, and the total want of funds in France to prosecute the war to any effect, will bring about the event so desirable to this country. Will not the probability of peace, induce in a greater degree an accommodation to the treaty? Our eastern country will feel its happy effects. We shall have our full proportion of the benefits attending the restoring the West Indian islands to a state of productiveness. I pray you to consider the importance of possessing the falls below the Kennebec tract and erecting mills thereon. You would by this measure establish a *great annual revenue*, and prevent that depredation of the lumber which will otherwise be made. Besides, a handsome establishment there would light up that part of the country so as to attract attention. Believe me, you will find the southern part of that tract better land than can elsewhere be found, and the northern part ten times more valuable on account of its lumber. This article now is highly valuable, and its value encreases more than 10 per cent per annum, but an efficient arrangement should be made to prevent its being plundered.

I observe with concern the lawless disposition of your people to the westward.⁷ It is unfortunate your legislature is not in session to take prompt measures to check that disposition, for I am apprehensive the governor will only write letters about it. Our disturbances to the eastward, especially on the Waldo Patent, will I flatter myself be terminated well. Our government is determined in its measures, as you will perceive by the resolves I have transmitted you. The Governor⁸ however is not quite so vigorous. He is indeed to old and debilitated for his office, but it is questionable whether the gratitude of the people will permit his removal. But

⁷ This disturbance arose over the Pennsylvania law which required lands to be settled within two years of the date of acquiring title. See S. J. and E. H. Buck, *The Planting of Civilization in Western Pennsylvania*, 207-210.

⁸ Samuel Adams.

he cannot last long. If he is now chosen, it is probable he would resign before another election.

Yours affectionately
H. KNOX

Cobb to Bingham, Boston, 28 March 1796 [BP]⁹

Boston March 28th. 1796

My dear Sir:

Since my return from Philadelphia, I have been, 'till lately, with my family at Taunton, making such arrangements as are necessary for theirs and my departure for Maine. For the last week I have been in this town, procuring such papers from the Secretary's office and other documents as are requir'd by the Attorney General for prosecuting the original grantees of Trenton so as to revest the Commonwealth in that township.¹ A resolution for this purpose passed the legislature, with some difficulty, at the close of their late session, in which the Attorney General is directed to do this business at the expense of the present proprietors. This subject I have already mentioned to you, and you may be assured that the property you own in that township, and which is very valuable, is a nullity to you untill the closure of this prosecution. I have likewise been conversing with Shaw about his reservations in your purchase of Gouldsboro'. It seems most of these were disputed titles at the time of Jackson's contract. Some of them are now recover'd by Shaw, and ought to be purchas'd, especially a good new saw mill well situated at Musqueto Harbour² and a mill seat with the landing at the head of the western bay of Gouldsboro'. For the mill, I am ask'd one thousand dollars, but I shall not purchase it at that price, altho' the annual rent would be 20 per cent at least, as I am acquainted with some circumstances that I think will put it in my possession for a less sum if it is agreeable to you to have the purchase made. The mill seat and landing may be purchas'd at the same rate as you have given for like property there.

Shaw will deduct for prompt payment of your instalments 19 per cent, that is the annual interest up to the dates of those instalments. Jackson has offer'd to pay him if he will deduct 25 per cent, but Shaw has refus'd. Perhaps he may come a little lower.

⁹ There is a 'practically identical copy of this letter in CP.

¹ The original grantees were those who had been granted the township of Trenton in 1762, and who had failed to live up to the conditions of their grant. See an undated memorandum on Trenton in Cobb's hand in CP.

² See the map of Gouldsbrough facing page 524.

I have convers'd with the Treasurer about receiving the State debt for any anticipations you may make. He informs that he has no concern in this business, but it rests with the commissioners of the sinking fund of whom he would enquire and give me their answer this week. As they shall determine, he will receive.

Those persons who have requested the purchase of townships in the northern division I have not seen since my return. They were in this town during my absence at Philadelphia, and left letters for me in which they express their disappointment at my absence, and their intentions of closing their proposals in the course of the next month. A Mr. Swan of New London (Connecticut) has likewise been at my house. He left a letter proposing the purchase of three or four townships. This gentleman I saw the last year in Maine, and from what he then said, his intentions are to operate on the lands up the Machias Rivers. I have wrote him that he may have one, or two townships at most at a dollar per acre payable in six years, the two first without interest, with a proper proportion of settlers.³

Colonel Jones, who is here from Gouldsboro', informs me that the system for regulating the lumber business has gone into compleat operation with very little opposition. The Machias people at first *talk'd big*, but my agent, meeting with the unanimous support of the good people there, soon adjusted all differences. In the proceeds of this operation I anticipate the reimbursement of the expence of the last year. If it should do this, it would be a pleasing thing thus far.

In examining the papers I have with me, I find I cannot make out my accounts of the last years expences 'till my return to Gouldsboro'. The amount of this expence, however, appears to me to be not less than three thousand dollars, two thousand of which you have already advanc'd. The other I must draw for by the next post. I have already receiv'd of you one thousand dollars on my own account, and on the first of May next five hundred dollars more will be due to compleat my annual salary. This sum, together with one thousand dollars in advance for the next years salary, I must request your permission to draw for in the course of the ensuing month, and if the arrangement of your affairs can possibly admit of it, I must further request your assistance in the business I mentioned to you just at my departure from Philadelphia. I have so conducted my concerns as not to require more than three thousand five hundred dollars, which, if you could advance, or request our friend General Jackson to do on a six months credit, will not only lay me under the greatest obligation, but liberate me from all my embarrassments in such manner that my de-

³ For Cobb's letter to Swan, see the following document.

parture for Maine would be a subject of pleasure, and my exertions and residence there uncheck'd and unclouded. The future reimbursement of this advance shall be in any manner you may direct whenever I shall have the pleasure of seeing you in Maine or elsewhere.

After mature reflection and conversing with General Knox on the subject, I am persuaded that it will be necessary to take with me two house wrights for finishing your houses at Gouldsboro'. I shall obtain these on the best terms I can. I shall likewise endeavour to take down two brick makers—these I hope will be no expence to you.

The settlers going on to No. 17⁴ are now preparing for their departure. I have wrote Peters to run that township into lots. Out of these people I hope to git some that will go upon the roads; but I shall find it difficult, if not impossible, to obtain any here to contract for this business, and labour being so scarce there that possibly at last, in the prosecution of this important object, I shall be obliged to resort to the very expensive mode of hiring for this purpose. This, however, shall be the last resort after every other expedient has fail'd.

I must particularly request you not to omit the powers of agency, for the sale of land, and for giving deeds to the settlers. Indeed, I cannot go into that country without them.

What has become of my questions and your answers? Please to remember me respectfully as well as very affectionately to Mr. Baring and believe me ever your friend

and obedient servant
DAVID COBB

*Cobb to Cyrus Swan, Boston, 30 March 1796 [CP]*⁵

Boston March 30th. 1796

My dear Sir:

On my return from Philadelphia I found your letter of January 29th ultimo at my house. I am very sorry I had not the pleasure of seeing you then.

Since I saw you at Machias the lands of that country have greatly risen

⁴ Township No. 17 was the present Deblois.

⁵ Swan had met Cobb in Maine in the summer of 1795. He called on Cobb at Taunton in January, 1796, and left a letter for him asking for terms on the purchase of land. See Swan to Cobb, Taunton, 29 January 1796, in CP. In a letter dated Stonington, 5 May 1796, in CP he replied to this letter of Cobb's and said that the terms were too high. One Seth Bannister in a letter dated Brookfield, 22 February 1796, in CP, also asked about Township No. 2, North Division, but nothing seems to have come of this nibble either.

in value, and large operations are commencing, with capitals equal to the object, to enhance this value to a much greater height. I have it not therefor in my power to give you lands at the price I could the last year, but they are still at a price, if you will permit the seller to advise the buyer, that must be an object in the purchase, and a great one, if you do not permit delay to arrest your intentions.

The best terms I can give you for one or two townships—more I cannot spare—are, one dollar per acre payable in six years in four annual instalments, that is, the two first years without interest, the four last with interest and a quarter part of the principle annually—the land to remain a security for the payments, and sixty settlers on a township, twenty of which to be placed on the land in the course of the two first years, the rest, so as to meet our engagements with the Commonwealth in the course of four or five years after. This settling duty must be secured by personal bonds with forfeiture of 60 dollars for each deficient settler. By these terms you will observe that you pay nothing for three years. Please to let me hear from you in all next month, directed to this place.

I am, dear sir, your friend and obedient servant
D. C.

*Bingham to Knox, Philadelphia, 2 April 1796 [KP]*⁶

My dear General:

Philadelphia April 2d 1796

I have received yours of the 24 ultimo. Please to inform me at what price six per cent stock can be purchased with you, and what commission your brokers charge for purchasing stock.⁷

I shall probably accept of Shaws offer, and pay him in cash at the discount of 25 per cent. I hope the deeds are ready to be delivered and the title unexceptionable. I have heard he effected some purchases of lots on my account, the last summer, which I should much regret, as I think the price extravagant. These must not be incorporated in the deeds, as they are excluded from the bargain made with Mr. Baring. I hope soon to receive the deeds of the private purchases, as I am uneasy untill the business is finally arranged.

I wish you to make an enquiry concerning the number of settlers on the lower purchase, and at what time it is supposed the certificate thereof can be forwarded to the Treasurer, for it is certainly disagreeable to give

⁶ KP, xxxix. 16.

⁷ In a letter dated Boston, 4 April 1796, in BP, Knox wrote Bingham that six per cents were selling in Boston from 18/2 to 18/4.

security for placing them there, when they are already on the spot.⁸

I think your conjectures about peace will be erroneous. The last accounts strongly indicate a continuation of the war. I do not find that the expectation of this event, when there was foundation for it, had any effect on the minds of the members, by inducing in them an inclination toward the treaty.

You will have seen the Presidents reply to the resolutions of the House. It is firm, sensible and dignified, and has made a great impression, being almost universally well received.⁹ They will, on Wednesday next, enter upon a discussion relative to this communication and record the opinions of the majority, concerning their construction of the treaty-making power, on the journals. They will then pass appropriations to carry it into effect. Fortunately the Spanish Treaty is referred to the House for a provision to carry it into effect, at the same time, and they will therefore become inseparably connected, at least in one branch of the legislature.

The western people, whose interests are to be so essentially promoted by the operation of these treaties, are taking the most active measures to influence the House to throw no obstacles in the way. Petitions on the subject are daily arriving.

I can readily foresee the advantages to be derived from an immediate attention to the Kennebeck tract, if a proper person could be engaged to superintend the same. With respect to the falls, I requested you in a former letter to enquire at what rate they could be purchased. An agent should be immediately appointed to prevent the depredations that are continually committing on the lumber. A person resident in the neighbourhood could, I suppose, be easily procured. You can operate in this business more effectually than I can who am at such a distance from the scene of action.

The disturbances to the westward of this State have arisen from the interpretations given to a law which stipulated that the purchasers of lands to the westward of the Alleghany should in two years make settlements on every tract.

⁸ In a letter dated Boston, 14 April 1796, in BP, Knox wrote Bingham that Colonel Nathan Jones of Gouldsborough would be willing to take the census of settlers on the lower tract and the six townships. On 22 April he wrote again that the colonel's fee would be high. Apparently nothing ever came of this proposal.

⁹ On 24 March 1796 the House had asked the President to turn over to them Jay's instructions and other papers connected with the treaty. On 30 March Washington sent a message to the House in which he politely refused their request and suggested that they had no power in connection with the ratification of treaties. For the President's reply, see *Writings of Washington* (J. C. Fitzpatrick, editor), xxxv. 2-5.

This has not been done, and the individuals in the neighbourhood have taken forcible possession.

Talon has made an immense sale of Pennsylvania lands for Nicholson—several hundred thousand acres at upwards of three dollars per acre.¹

I congratulate you sincerely on your appointment as a commissioner to fix the eastern boundary.² I do not suppose this business will be effected this summer, as we shall be concerned to forego your society.

With sincere regard I am

Yours affectionately

WM. BINGHAM

General Knox

Bingham to Knox, Philadelphia, 8 April 1796 [KP]³

My dear General:

Philadelphia April 8th 1796

I have received your favor of the 31st ultimo.⁴

General Cobb has our permission to dispose of a number of townships situated in the most convenient quarter of the tract for settlement, which I have no doubt he will effect to considerable advantage. I must request your advice and counsel in the arrangements he is about making.

I agree with you in opinion that a very great impression may be made on the value of this land in the course of the present year, if proper attention is paid to its improvement, and which I have no doubt will take place.

If Shaw will take 25 per cent less than the original price for prompt payment, you may make the agreement. He has already received nearly 5,000 dollars on account and I have no title, which is now absolutely necessary. It has been a very great disappointment to me, to have the settlement with Mr. Baring postponed for so long a period, for want of the titles. It was wrong in the first instance not to have been possessed of

¹ Omer Talon was the land agent for the Asylum Company, which controlled a million acres of land in Pennsylvania. John Nicholson was the leading speculator involved. See S. Livermore, *Early American Land Companies*, 171–174. For Alexander Baring's opinion of Talon, see below, pp. 893–894.

² According to the terms of Jay's Treaty, a three-man commission was to determine the true St. Croix. Washington first appointed Knox, who later refused on the ground that he was personally interested in the outcome. See H. S. Burrage, *Maine in the Northeastern Boundary Controversy*, 42.

³ KP, xxxix. 24.

⁴ This letter is in BP. In it Knox urges Bingham to start a program of bona fide settlements in Maine and says, "As to mere speculation, it is a phantom that will, that must vanish." He closes with another appeal for a loan from Baring.

them. If an express had been sent to Gouldsbrough, I should have been well pleased, and would not have regretted the expense. I very early observed, that Mr. Baring was a person of so much precision and regularity in all his arrangements, that it would be necessary to pay the most pointed attention to these points. I have no doubt that he is surprized that I am unable to exhibit the conveyances for the private purchases that I have already paid for. He is delicate in his enquiries on the subject, but often asks me when the titles may be expected. Considering the character that land jobbers in this country have usually obtained in Europe, there is a caution that necessarily results on the part of Europeans, whenever they treat with them. It was my pride and pleasure to promise him in this instance the most clear and indisputable titles, and I did expect to have shown them in the first instance. He has employed Mr. Wilcocks⁵ as his lawyer, who is a very scrutinizing character, and who will be solicitous to see all the papers.

I am really ashamed at again mentioning the subject, but our interest is essentially connected therewith, as a delay of payment will occasion an immense comparative loss, if that should take place in consequence thereof.

I have again seen Captain Anthony on the subject of your payments. I shall give him every aid in my power to extinguish these claims, if they should be demanded at the expiration of the period. The only mode I can resort to will be by discount, but I rather suppose the parties will be satisfied with discountable paper, as the obligation is a bond.

This place never was in such a situation with respect to money matters. Since I have been at the board of directors, I have never seen such distress, which arises from the immense speculations going forward to India and China, which exhaust the banks of their specie and there is no mode of replenishing them.

I have made very great sacrifices to fulfill my own engagements, which have been very heavy in this month. My acceptances to you will fall due the first of next month. It will be impossible for me to extinguish them (except I enter into the market with notes) without Baring should by that time make me some specie payments, which I flatter myself he will do. I had a credit on London, but it was abandoned as soon as the bargain was made with Mr. Baring as it was with his father and was conditional as relative to the purchase.⁶ I wish to know the price of six per cents at your place, as I must make that purchase in order to effect the deposit.

⁵ This was Alexander Wilcocks, attorney and Recorder for the city of Philadelphia. See *Heads of Families, First Census, Pennsylvania*, 227.

⁶ See Sir Francis Baring's letter to Bingham, above, p. 594.

I am with sincere and affectionate esteem

Yours etc.

WM. BINGHAM

General Knox

Bingham to Cobb, Philadelphia, 19 April 1796 [CP]

My dear General:

Philadelphia April 19th 1796

I should sooner have replied to your letter of the 28th ultimo, had I not wished to receive and transmit Mr. Baring's remarks on the subject of the projected settlements and improvements, which I herewith inclose you and to which I must solicit your attention, as conveying a variety of observations of a most interesting nature.

With respect to the questions you addressed to me, I think it will be unnecessary to enter into more detailed answers than those which you will find inclosed.

You must be sensibly impressed with the scope and object of our views, which are to effect settlements in the most expeditious manner and upon the most oeconomical terms, the tendency of which is to enhance the value of our lands by extending population and creating a demand for them.

In all your arrangements, these points must never be lost sight of, by a judicious attention to which, we are persuaded, our speculation must inevitably succeed, so as to answer our most sanguine expectations.

A variety of ideas will naturally occur to you, whilst employed in the active pursuits of this business, which cannot have the chance of seizing the reflections of persons not practically engaged.

You will of course turn them to account, as they may be calculated to promote the best interests of the company.

We have so much confidence in your judgment, that we give you a discretionary power to act in all usual occurrences. In cases of difficulty and peculiar importance, we shall expect your communications and that you will wait the result of our opinions.

As it is Mr. Baring's and my intention to make an early visit to the District, we shall be enabled more maturely to form our opinions on some essential points, as relative to the management of this property, which will have the aid of our personal observations, which is the only sure guide to a proper decision.

I observe that you have paid attention to the removal of the difficulties concerning the title to the township of Trenton, and it gives me pleasure to find that your efforts will be attended with success.

I had authorized General Knox, whilst at New York, to purchase La Roche's part of the same at 7/6 per acre. It is fortunate that he did not succeed, as the land was not worth such a price, with this incumbrance attached to it.

I hope you will be enabled to procure the assent of the Treasurer to receive State debt for any anticipations I may make. Inform me, if you please, whether the law makes it receivable in all payments due to the State, as well as at what rate it can be purchased.

You must not let those persons escape, who have made the overtures to purchase several townships in different divisions of this property. It is absolutely necessary that a rapid progress should be made this year, in order to lay the foundation of our future expectations.

The submission of the Machias people is as favorable a circumstance, as it was unexpected.

It evinces that the love of order and of the laws is prevalent in that country.

You have made a great mistake as relative to the sum advanced on account of improvements for the last year. It is within a trifle of five thousand dollars. General Jackson passed a draft for 1,000 dollars, which was paid August 25 1795. He passed his draft, whilst in this place in December for 1,000 dollars in favor of Captain Anthony, and he drew January 11 for 957.64 dollars, on the same account. You besides passed your draft 30 December 1795 for 1,000 dollars on the same account, all which sums you stand personally charged with, and which will be ballanced whenever the various expenditures which you have made, appear to your credit.⁷

As this business will now be carried on by a person whose department it will be to keep all the accounts of this settlement, it will become expedient to transmit them monthly, and to class all the expenditures under proper heads, so that they may be designated, according to their nature and importance. In forwarding to me the accounts of the various expences of last year, I wish you to subdivide them as much as possible, so that all the prominent features of expence may be distinctly viewed. By these means the application of all monies may be easily and seperately known, and a reform made in any species of expenditure that may be thought necessary.

In such an undertaking it is essential, that the greatest precision and correctness should take place, as copies of all the documents attending the arrangements of the business, will be regularly forwarded to Europe. A

⁷ All these drafts are in BP in a package of papers entitled "Vouchers for 1796."

diary should be kept of the principal events, which should likewise be transmitted.

Besides the abovementioned sums, you are charged with 1,000 dollars on account of your annual salary, which was drawn for in May 1795. That account, as well as all others must be made out untill the day when you took your departure from Philadelphia. At that period, a new account opens for our joint concern with Mr. Baring's connections.

Your draft to anticipate another portion of your annual compensation shall be duly honoured. And you may be assured that I will cheerfully do every thing in my power to aid your views relative to the loan which your necessities may require. At present I cannot make any determination on the subject. The difficulty of procuring the deeds for the private purchases has considerably retarded my settlement with Mr. Baring, insomuch that I cannot make any calculation with respect to the funds, which I shall have the power of commanding. I shall be able to communicate more fully with you, on this subject, in a short time.

There are some additional queries, which I have just discovered, to which I will reply by the next post.

I have prepared the power of attorney, which I should have sent by this opportunity, but it is necessary that it should be first seen by Mr. Baring.⁸

I am

sincerely yours etc.

WM. BINGHAM

General Cobb

Baring's Observations on the Maine Lands, Philadelphia,
19 April 1796 [CP]

I have been constantly desirous of delaying our instructions to General Cobb as long as possible and indeed of giving nothing but more temporary ones untill we can convert and settle on the spot the permanent mode of proceeding to be adopted to bring our lands forward, and this I hope we shall be ready to do in the month of June next. It appears, however, from General Cobbs letters that something must immediately be done that the train of advancement our lands are in and the prevalent rage to settle them may not be checked. Our want of local knowledge must make every system and plan we could form *here* very hazarded and I should there-

⁸ This power, dated 30 April 1796, is in CP and authorizes Cobb to sell lands for a period of six months.

fore propose confining our present instructions to those subjects alone which cannot suffer delay without prejudice. In doing this I should propose leaving a perfect discretionary power to our worthy and intelligent manager after furnishing him with an outline of our sentiments on the principle subjects, that his proceedings may not clash with our future plans whatever they may be. Instructions are wanted chiefly for three general purposes: 1st, for making sales; 2d, for making purchases; 3d, for making improvements. According to my ideas of settlement, some of the first improvements should precede all sale, particularly those which tend to render a settlers lands acceptable, such as roads etc. This has been confirmed by Williamsons opinion and by his practice.⁹ It is true that improvements are more easily made when lands are to a certain extent settled, but the difference of expence would be small in comparison to the difference in the price which the lands would sell for when improved. A few thousand pounds judiciously expended in improvements would double the capital value of the lands and this operation should in my opinion take place previous to any sales of consequence.

It is however proper to begin drawing gradually inhabitants on the lands that an additional number of persons may be interested in the general improvements, and it is particularly essential that after the lands have once attracted the public attention, every applicant should be accommodated if not to the full extent of his demands at least with part. The time is certainly not yet come to sell to speculators and we should attend to no purchasers who by their purchase do not add additional value to the lands. Those who make offers from Connecticut I presume intend immediate settlements and are consequently valuable. I should therefore think it advisable to satisfy them all, giving each as small a portion as possible and imposing high and prompt settling duties. I would begin by selling at one dollar the acre which is cheaper than any lands that are under no local disadvantages could be procured for settling on the continent. It would be of no real advantage to the settler to purchase cheaper. The character of lands is often computed by the price, and considering the facilities to be given in payments I think this very moderate. At this rate I should have no objection to sell any quantity not exceeding ten townships which is sufficient to begin with, we must then wait untill these settlements produce an additional value to the country in general and open our next

⁹ This was a reference to the work of Charles Williamson, agent for the Pulteney Associates in western New York. See P. D. Evans, "The Pulteney Purchase," *N. Y. State Hist. Ass'n Quart. Jour.*, III. *passim*. See also H. I. Cowan, *Charles Williamson, Rochester Historical Society Publications*, XIX (1941).

sales something higher and so advance progressively. It would be well to inform the present purchasers that it is our intention not to sell more under a certain price. This will raise theirs in their own estimation and raise the general expectation of the progressive advance of the country in general. As to the selection of lands, I would let every body follow his own whim. There is no advantage in selling the bad and reserving the good. On the contrary the good tracts should and must be first settled, but I would sell as little as possible townships which join each other otherwise than by their angles that a general population may be diffused over the country.

Sooner than lose a good bargain, I would reluctantly consent to two townships going together in this manner but never more. The wish of new settlers to remain near each other is very natural and will only be removed in part by rendering the communication through the country easy by means of roads which is a most essential and pressing operation. The facilities to be given for the payments is a great temptation to purchasers and must always insure good prices. I think there should in this respect be a difference between the Connecticut speculator who takes one or more townships and the real farmer who takes a few hundred acres. The former have generally the means of earlier payments and should not be let to speculate so long at our risk. The latter is, on the contrary, the most valuable to us, the effects his industry produce are more immediate and he is generally obliged to wait for the proceeds of that industry to make his payments. For the farmer I should think the following terms proper: a trifle in ready money if possible (if not, I should not insist on it); one half the remainder in four years, the remainder in six years, interest to commence after the second year at 6 per cent and to be paid regularly every year. The speculator should pay 10 per cent ready money, forty per cent in two years, fifty per cent in four years, the interest as above. My motives for stipulating some ready money is to make the purchaser have something at stake and not to suffer him to abandon his bargain. With the speculator, I would make this condition a *sine qua non*, but with the farmer I do not know in how far it is practicable. Perhaps more indulgence is advisable. This must be determined on according to circumstances. Desirable characters should be encouraged and indulged at almost any sacrifice as in so new a country we cannot expect that many emigrants will bring more than their industry and labor. I would preserve, in as far as it is practicable, a sameness and regular form of proceeding with every body. This will prevent jealousies and render our arrangements and accounts less complicated. Whether the deeds for the land

should be retained untill the last payments are made, or whether the deeds should be delivered and the lands mortgaged I cannot now decide on, but we should certainly be secured by the lands in some shape. When we all meet at Gouldsboro' we shall form some plan for attracting still more the public attention to these lands. In proportion as it increases, we can raise our demands and I have no doubt that with consistant and conciliatory management we can from our superior local situation at least equal the operations in the Genisee. By making large sales at the present moment we should labor under two pointed disadvantages: first, we should not reap the benefits of the additional value our improvements will give; and secondly, we are selling what we never saw, and can be thus taken by surprise by those who have viewed particular tracts and situations. We cannot therefore be too eager to understand our property, and to push forward these improvements which will throw some light on the real situation of the country. At present we are acting in the dark and may be selling from the map the most valuable tracts. As far as I can judge (and it is only from the map), I do not think that any one part of the country should be particularly preferred in sales. In general they should be dispersed and as much as possible to the center. I would sell one or at most two townships on the line of water from the Penobscot to the Schoodic Lakes, and I would not sell above two townships on the western line of the Middle and Northern Division. I mean the townships the nearest the Penobscot, for they will become ultimately more valuable. Strong settling duties will cover the fine we shall probably have to pay the State, but this is a trifling consideration comparative with the advantage that will otherwise accrue from them. I do not know to what extent they are practicable, but I would carry them to the utmost. It would be well to stipulate for a small proportion very early, for it is the first few that it will be difficult to bring on. When they are there, the others will follow of themselves. As to our town of Gouldsboro', I believe the best plan will be to let on lease and not to sell, but this we must discuss hereafter. I would sell none of our islands and no seashore townships in toto, but only some particular spots if they should be necessary for the settlers elsewhere but not otherwise. And in general I would observe as a maxim that every sale we make for the present is merely to draw inhabitants and to better the remaining part. Every sale must tend to this end. We do not now sell for the purpose of realizing our speculation. On the contrary, we wish to retain as great a share as possible in the persuasion that a few years exertion and care will change totally the complexion of this valuable country. Nothing further occurs to me at present on the subject of sales and I believe what

I have said includes every thing General Cobb wants instruction about. I conceive our speculation altogether to be of sufficient magnitude and we do not wish to extend it by additional purchases, excepting in as far as the objects we may purchase may add additional value to what we already possess, or may be requisite to facilitate our operations thereon. It is utterly impossible to judge of the expediency of such purchases without local knowledge and we can therefore only state our views and intentions and leave General Cobb to exercise his judgment under them. Our arrival in Maine may enhance the pretensions of the present holders and it is therefore prudent to lay our hands immediately on any objects which we shall certainly want. I would buy up any thing that was a tolerable bargain in and near Gouldsboro', particularly land not built on. In doing this, I would confine the purchases to what is held on speculation and not by actual settlers, our object being to attract and preserve usefull inhabitants and not to frighten them away by a system of monopoly. I see no use in buying up mills. It is not our interest to operate, if we can avoid it, in detail, but on the contrary to encourage others in these pursuits. If any however were ill managed or held by absent speculators, I would purchase them and let them on a lease that we may command all the local advantages of the country. That we may be able to lay out the town of Goldsboro' [*sic*] according to our own fancy I would buy what could be reasonably obtained, attending always to the above mentioned principles of not distressing the inhabitants.

Our operations in the country in general must always be calculated to attach the people to us. We must always be ready to help and never inclined to oppress them. The disposition of the people will depend solely on our treatment of them. This must always be kept in view, for the success of the speculation is dependent on it. Purchasing or building houses does not at present strike me as being of any utility, excepting such as we may want ourselves for our establishments. At all events it can be left 'till our arrival. Any tracts in the neighbouring townships that may serve to make our territory more compact will be acceptable. I should have no objection to buying any of the sea shore townships at moderate prices, and of course not to the township No. 4, which General Cobb calls Steuben, if it is the No. 4 on the map between No. 7 and No. 5. I know nothing of this township, but from its position on the map, it must be valuable to us and I would propose its being purchased immediately. I would also purchase all the lottery claims that could be had with which our lower Million is intersperced. The prices to be given must vary according to their situation. It would be very agreeable to get rid of this intricasy. Making occasional

purchases in this manner would have the double advantage of collecting what may be usefull to us and of supporting the price of lands in the country which, as we are the chief holders, is essential. I would on this principle prevent any thing from being hawked about and be always ready to buy any thing that may be selling under its value. When we make our sales hereafter we must pursue the same principle and buy back of any body who dislikes his bargain, establishing a general office for this purpose. This is a maxim of Williamsons. It operates on the price of lands as a sinking fund does on the price of stocks. It gives currency, encourages enterprize and is attended with no risk. For the arrangement and discussion of this there will be time hereafter. I should prefer paying ready money for the purchases we make if an adequate reduction of price can be obtained, which can meet no doubt no difficulty. I should wish General Cobb to consider these explanations as an authority to purchase on the principles laid down or even to extend them in any instance his superior local information and judgment should deem proper, for as before said our instructions are all hazarded. We have no information to ground them on. We are precisely in the same situation with respect to the third general object for which instructions were required—improvements. We have so much to do on this score that it will be easy to delay the questionable part of them untill our arrival. In the mean time I would have the rough operations immediately begun, particularly cutting roads in the directions proposed. It would certainly be desirable to have this and indeed every work done by contract, but as this may not be possible and it is of the greatest importance that the work should not be delayed, I would hire workmen immediately. I am strongly impressed with the necessity of this operation. It should precede every thing, for before it is completed we cannot understand what we are about. In this as in every improvement oeconomy is necessary, but the necessary expence whatever it may be, must be incurred. General Cobb should hereby be authorized to use his discretion in this business and to take with him the necessary surveyors etc. I know of nothing else that can be immediately begun but a number of small objects will naturally occur to General Cobb about which he need not wait for further instructions. The plan for improvement and settlement of the country will require much deliberation and discussion when we are all collected at Gouldsboro'. I shall not enter upon the subject at present, but merely state that in my opinion the provision for this purpose should be liberal, as we shall be ultimately amply repaid. In the mean time, it will be well to puff the intended exertions in public so as to draw attention that way, and we will afterwards take care that the reality shall

answer it. General Cobbs quires need not, I believe, be more particularly replied to for the present, and I see nothing else that will not bear delay. They most of them involve many important considerations which must depend on the plan we shall adopt after a personal discussion with him.

Mr. Bingham will of course desire General Cobb to press as much as in his power the settlement of the last years accounts and likewise the settlement of the pending suits respecting the titles to any of the tracts, which is very desirable. Mr. Bingham will also send a temporary power for the purposes required, as mentioned in General Cobbs letter, which it appears is absolutely necessary.

Copy from the original

WM. BINGHAM¹

*Bingham's Answers to Questions, Philadelphia, 19 April 1796 [CP]*²

1st. How much of the land, if any, may be sold in townships—if thus sold, at what price, on what conditions, and how are the payments to be secured, and are they to be selected alternately?

1st. In our conference we determined on the sale of six or eight townships with which to commence our operations, the price one dollar per acre, terms of credit four to six years, part thereof not exceeding two years without interest, a condition to be annexed thereto, that a large number of settlers should be placed thereon within a stipulated period. Since Congress have fixed the price of their western lands at two dollars per acre, a great additional value has been impressed on all lands, ripe for settlement.

2d. Are any proper situations on the different rivers to be selected for inland towns, and are they to be laid out as such, and any further operations pursued in the progress of them?

2d. A more explicit and satisfactory answer can be given to this question when we have personally viewed the country and examined the advantages resulting from such a measure. In the mean time, any situations that are particularly favoured, may be reserved.

3d. Is the measure for cutting of roads, as heretofore contemplated, viz., from Gouldsboro' northward to the end of the first million purchase,

¹ The signature is in Bingham's hand, the rest in that of a clerk.

² Though these questions and answers are in the same hand as that of the Baring document printed above, internal evidence indicates that the author was Bingham. The questions had been proposed by Cobb. There are copies of Baring's Observations and Bingham's Answers to Questions in BaP.

from the narrows of Penobscot River to Machias, and from the head of the tide on the same river to Passamaquody still to be pursued? Is this road cutting business to be done by contract or by hiring the labourers?

3d. Cutting roads thro' the tract and opening thereby a communication in various directions is so essentially connected with the prosperity of the settlement that it must be pursued with spirit and intelligence. The direction we have already determined. As for the mode of effecting it, contract will be the most eligible, with a view to oeconomy, which in all enterprizes so extensive and complicated, should be essentially attended to. I do not mean a parsimony that would starve the operation of settlement by withholding the necessary expence, but a discreet frugality in the disposal of the funds.

4th. Are any of the townships to be run out into settlers lotts for the accomodation of settlers, and who is to be the surveyor for this purpose?

4th. It is already agreed that one township shall be immediately surveyed into small farms for settlers. It is left to your discretion to employ such surveyor as you may deem most competent. Peters is perhaps too old to be alert—and when men in such a service are employed by the day the quantum of their work depends on their personal activity. I have recently paid in the State of New York one dollar and a quarter per day to a very skillfull surveyor, who gave me great satisfaction, not only with regard to the precision of his work, but the expedition with which he performed it.

5. Are any of the saw mills near the sea shore, which are situated on the rivers that come out of the interior country, to be purchased, and is any extraordinary price to be given for them?

5. I am not persuaded of the propriety of immediately purchasing saw mills near the sea shore, except a handsome revenue could be procured therefrom, or they would controul and circumvent the log cutting business in the District. In this latter view of the subject, it might be advantageous to the concern to possess them. It would therefore be expedient to make conditional contracts with those who are disposed to sell them, which we might ratify on our arrival, if we approved the purchase. As soon as a general peace takes place, the demand for lumber will be immense, which is an additional consideration in favor of such purchases.

6. Are any of the mill seats now in possession and near the sea shore to be built upón, or any of the old mills now standing to be repaired?

6. I would rather suspend a decision on these points, untill we could personally examine the advantages that might result from the measure proposed.

7. May a mill be built for the purpose of making flour?

7. A grist mill would be very desireable to a young settlement and would be a strong inducement to attract settlers. If it could be built on oeconomical terms, I think it would be expedient to incur the expence. I wish to form an estimate and make known the amount thereof.

8. Are any settlers to be induced by hire to sett themselves down on certain places on rivers where the lands of others adjoin yours, as a mean of preventing the depridation of lumber within your purchase?

8. If it should be deemed necessary to plant settlers in particular spots, who by their care and vigilance should prevent depridations on the lumber, I think it would be most adviseable to recompence such characters by the grant of lands, rather than by an annual stipend. I can discover but one objection to this mode, which is that, should they prove unworthy of confidence, they could not be easily removed, after possessing land in their own right. This arrangement must be left to your discretion, to act as you think proper.

9. What is to be done with the iron ores? If found in quantity and the quality good, may furnaces be erected for castings?

9. The expence of erecting furnaces is very considerable and the consumption of castings will not be great untill the population of the country has increased. Besides labour forms a very prominent part of the expence in all such undertakings, and in young settlements, it usually commands an exorbitant price. Nothing could therefore justify the undertaking, but the excellent quality of the ore, the abundance and cheapness of fuel, and the prospect of deriving great advantages from expectation. If all these circumstances combined, the enterprize might be undertaken advantageously, but it must be an object of a seperate nature, unconnected with the business of settlement, which should not be interrupted by any casual or contingent objections.

10. May permission, in future, be given for the cutting of lumber off your lands, you receiving therefor the customary proportion in such cases, or better terms, if they can be procured?

10. Where lumber can be effectually prevented from spoiliation, it will be most adviseable to preserve it, as it is an article that is rising immencely in value. But when it is so exposed that the most circumspect attention cannot protect it from depredation, it will be necessary to derive as much advantage from the evil as possible. Therefore the best terms must be made, which the nature of the case will admit.

11. May persons be employed to reconoitre the country for the discovery of pit coal, ores, etc.?

11. As our intentions are to settle townships in various positions in the District, the country will be fully explored from the intercourse and communication that will naturally result in the progress of the business. It would be more oeconomical to offer a reward for the discovery of any valuable ores and fossells, than to employ persons whose attention should be directed to that sole object.

12. What is to be done with the township of Gouldsboro'—is the point to be laid out in city lots? Are wharfs and stores to be built, and such numbers of houses as will accommodate merchants, traders and others on their first arrival? May the other lands of this township be sold to settlers, and may the cleared farms of the same be sold at the purchased price?

12. It is naturally to be inferred, from the local advantages which the township of Gouldsborough possesses, that it will become a sea port of considerable consequence. It must depend essentially on the settlement of the surrounding country and the extent of capital of the traders who may reside there, for its importance. Some plan of regular proceeding for its improvement should be previously formed, in order to preserve uniformity, as well as to accommodate settlers. To every building lot there should be a pasture lot, in order to suit the convenience of the settlers. The fee simple might be disposed of, or they might be lett upon ground rent. With respect to the proposed idea of building wharfs and stores for merchants, traders and others on their first arrival, it would be proper to reflect seriously on the advantages to be derived from the adoption of such a plan, as the expence, to be incurred, would be very considerable. We shall be enabled during the course of our visit, to form a proper decision on this point, as well as with respect to all others connected with the improvement of this town. We wish you to digest a plan that you suppose will be most suitable for the purpose, which we will take into consideration and form a result thereon after our arrival.

*Bingham to Knox, Philadelphia, 23 April 1796 [KP]*³

My dear General:

Philadelphia April 23 1796

I have to acknowledge receipt of your two favors of the 14 and 18 instant.⁴ It gives me pleasure to find that you have a prospect of obtaining

³ KP, xxxix. 47.

⁴ These two letters are in BP and report progress on negotiations with Shaw and the forwarding of the necessary papers.

and forwarding the papers relative to the subordinate purchases. They are absolutely essential to our settlement, or I should not be so importunate.

The sentiments you express in your last and in some of your preceding letters, relative to your engagements and your wish that I should operate in relieving you from the pressure of them, call for an exposure of my situation as open and candid as that which you have made to me, in order to convince you that I am disposed to do every thing which your claims on my friendship could possibly require, if I possessed the means.

I must first premise that I have not eight thousand dollars in stock of any kind or capital in trade, independent of what is tied up by articles of copartnership with Mr. Gilmor, or what is deposited as security for a loan made in Holland, over neither of which I have not the least controul, untill the partnership is expired, or the loan extinguished.

When the sale was made to Mr. Baring I immediately devoted 100,000 dollars of the proceeds, to the redemption of my stock, by the extinction of this loan.

If this measure had not been adopted, the alternative would have been a sale of my stock and the last advices from England quote six per cents at 85 per cent or 16/6 in the pound. This would have been an immense sacrifice, and from the recent convulsions in our politics, they will probably fall much lower. This deduction being made, left me the command of about 135,000 dollars, as the residue of Mr. Baring's sale, from estimation.

I will now inform you what demands there are upon this fund as connected immediately with the fulfillment of the engagements made for our lands, and which must indispensably be complied with:

Duers notes due in December last and which were attached in my hands but which will be payable within a few days by the decrees of the court	15,900
Money borrowed to pay the installment due the State in February	6,297
An installment due to the State the 1st June, to be provided for about the 20 May	30,000
A purchase of six per cent stock as a deposit for the settling duties, in order to become possessed of the deeds for the lower tract, amounting to 48,500 six per cents, which will cost	45,000
Purchase made of Shaw, not exactly ascertained, say about	15,000

Duers notes payable this year, being the last payment	<u>18,600</u>
	130,797
To which add my agreement expressed in my last letter to advance for you the 1 May and 1 June two several sums of	<u>17,700</u>
	148,497

This forms a considerable sum beyond the amount of the ballance remaining from the sale. None of my own engagements can be liquidated. They amount to about 45,000 dollars due at banks, which have been procured from time to time, in order to enable me to fulfill my obligations. Such claims are renewable every sixty days and so oppressive to my feelings and require such agitation and maneuvering at different periods, when the banks are pushed, that I would rather pay 20 per cent per annum, than be subjected to them. No money is to be procured on interest, but by borrowing at the extortionate monthly premium of 2 per cent, in the way of discounting notes by Jew brokers or merchants.

As for resources in European connections, I have none. I never asked but one credit which was of Messrs. Barings, which became of no avail after the sale was made to his son. I have had no commercial correspondence with Europe, except such as relates to the sale of the Maine Lands, concerning which I have wrote a folio volume.

Besides money borrowed at the bank I have a loan from the Pennsylvania Insurance Company, of 20,000 dollars, the process of procuring payment of which is very summary, as they have a bond and judgment and a mortgage of at least double the amount. I have scattering debts, to the extent of 10,000 dollars.

Independent of the sums above enumerated there will remain three payments on the Kennebeck tract, amounting to 90,000 dollars and 37,500 dollars for settling duties. My anxiety to fulfill all my obligations with punctuality cannot be exceeded, as no person can suffer more under an existing state of difficulties relative to monied engagements. It is impossible to sell any real estate at any price so as to command funds, which leads me almost to despair of paying off the debts that I have due at the bank, without the necessity of renewing them again.

If I had not continued the partnership with Mr. Gilmor, I might have had the command of a large sum of money, as soon as the affairs of that connection could have been liquidated. But from a false calculation, I supposed that I should not have occasion for it. I now regret, tho too late, my determination.

Thus situated, I must have recourse to such expedients as opportunities may enable me to embrace. I have to pay 12,000 dollars on account of

the lands more than I receive, deducting the sum to be remitted to extinguish my loan, which is the only relief I procure, by preventing my stock to be sacrificed.

Some of my most particular friends, at this moment of general distress, presuming from the accounts that are propagated, that I was to receive 100,000 guineas from Mr. Baring, have applied to me for temporary loans. I have been forced to lend some smaller sums, where I could not enter into a detailed explanation, but I have been under the disagreeable necessity of refusing many.

Under all these difficulties I have still a very sanguine hope, arising from Mr. Baring's having taken a concern in this property. It now seems to occupy his attention as his favorite object, and he is fully intent on visiting these lands and cooperating in a provision for the settlement of them, in the most prompt and effectual manner. Having planted the tree, they will water it, and I have the most flattering expectations of the whole District being benefited by their speculation.

I have again spoke to him on the subject of purchasing a share of your eventual profits, but he is very averse to diminishing your interest in the property. It does not seem that he has the power, according to the system he is about pursuing, to lend money on interest. But I shall again press him on this point. I have promised him a detailed account of the first cost, in order that he may judge the value of the residuary profits. I believe that there is no one who he would sooner oblige than you. You conciliated him, in a wonderfull way, during his short residence at New York, and you are now his constant toast at table.

His situation is somewhat delicate. He is a young partner in a greater commercial house in Europe, and he seems to govern his conduct by the most guarded circumspection. But it would be less proper to urge him on such subjects at present, as I have already had many conversations recently thereon, but particularly, as he hears in the debates in Congress, from the most respectable characters, the most envenomed reflections against his country, and as it is supposed that a majority in the House of Representatives will endeavor to defeat the treaty by refusing to vote appropriations to carry it into effect. However, on this point I am easy, as I am convinced that after some struggles, the event will be favorable. But in the mean time, the feelings of Englishmen are wounded, and their confidence in the country shaken.

This is more to be lamented, as our only dependence for the sale of vacant lands must be on them, who are the only great capitalists in Europe.

It must be recollected that Mr. Baring has purchased but a little more

than a quarter of our two tracts. It therefore behoves us, to resort to every effort to procure his favorable report, in order to give an additional value to the remainder.

If he had not opportunely appeared and entered into this contract, I should almost have despaired, for altho the settlements would eventually have rendered the lands very valuable, yet the returns would have been very slow, that would have been derived from such payments.

I therefore ardently wish that advantage, such as we have already derived, may be increased, and therefore urge the necessity of making this country a personal visit, convinced that [*sic*] of its making the most favorable impression upon his mind. When he has seen it, examined it, and can speak confidently of it from personal observation, he will be enabled to benefit us most essentially on his return to Europe, either in a sale of the portion (we may wish to part with) of the remaining quantity of our lands, or by forming into a systematic plan of dividing and selling by shares, the lands in which he is to be concerned.

These ideas strike me so forcibly, that I am determined, however inconvenient, to make every sacrifice, rather than not accompany him and I mean to make the party as respectable as possible.

If the plan should not succeed, I shall have the gratification of reflecting that I have made use of the most adviseable efforts to recommend it.

There are several persons, deeply concerned in landed property, who are endeavoring, by unwearied attentions and the most seducing offers, to engage him in purchases, but they have hitherto been unavailing in their views.

I shall continue my best exertions to render you every service in my power. You will observe by the statement of my situation, that so far from being placed in a happy and unembarassed position, that I will not be enabled to pay off any part of my debt to the bank nor my several engagements to individuals. Your situation I acknowledge to be very disagreeable, but I hope with exertion, we shall be both extricated and [at] some sacrifice, which I shall have no hesitation in making.

I before informed you that I had endorsed a note for Colonel Hodgdon to take up that which was due. I offered to do the same for Captain Anthony, supposing that he would have recourse to the bank discounts to raise the necessary sum to extinguish your obligations and that they might continue to be renewed untill it was convenient to you to pay them. But he wishes to make me become payer, which I cannot think he is authorized by the tenor of your letters to request of me.

I have some reason to believe that a majority will be obtained in favor

of the appropriations in the first instance. It will be a fortunate circumstance if it succeeds.

I am

My dear General

Affectionately yours

WM. BINGHAM

General Knox

Cobb to Bingham, Taunton, 30 April 1796 [BP]⁵

Taunton April 30th. 1796

My dear Sir:

Soon after the date of my last letter (28th ultimo) I returned to this place, having previously completed the business with the Attorney General, and gave him a fee of fifty dollars. Your letter of the 23d ultimo, with the inclos'd power, follow'd me a few days after.

I have been attending to the adjustment of my old concerns, and particularly to the settlement of the remaining part of my father's estate, to whose will I was joint executor; and intended to have departed from this place with my family on the 20th instant, and after visiting Northampton, where Mrs. Cobb has a sister and where I should have had an opportunity of seeing some of those persons who have requested the purchase of townships (of whom I have heard nothing since my last), I should have embark'd for Gouldsboro' by the 10th of May from Boston. But unfortunately on the 15th, I was attack'd with a fever which has confin'd me ever since to my chamber. I am now a little better, but when I shall be able to commence my journey, God only knows. All my plans are deranged, and I cannot yet determine when or how I shall proceed. My intention is however, if possible, to visit those people at Northampton before I depart for Maine, if they do not visit me.

The settlers from this neighbourhood have engaged a vessel out of this river, and they intend sailing with their families and effects for Gouldsboro' on the 15th instant.

I have had no answer from Swan of New London. I suspect my terms were a little too high.

By my late letters from Gouldsboro' I find the business of taking lumber has not been so amicably adjusted as Colonel Jones had represented. Those people who have been accusom'd to lumbering on Van Burkell's townships have refus'd complying with my terms, and actions have been

⁵ For an account of Cobb's movements and activities from the time he left Philadelphia until his arrival with his family at Gouldsborough in June, see his diary, *Bangor Historical Magazine*, v. 53-56.

bro't against them. I am very sorry to hear this, as I am convinced that party prejudices and personal resentments between the agent and the trespassers have given rise to such proceedings. I shall endeavour, with my *suaviter* to git out of this scrape as soon as possible, but it may be necessary in effecting it to have Van Burkell's power of agency, as you have not been in possession of this property. However, you may have compleated your contract for it. Can a power be obtain'd from Doctor Ruston, or from the person to whom he has transferr'd No. 4? Do inquire and obtain it if you can. 'This township has been about strip'd of its timber this winter.

I feel very anxious to have your answer to my last letter—whether you can, without great inconveniency, make any pecuniary arrangements for me? and whether I may draw on you for fifteen hundred dollars, as I mentioned, before my departure for Gouldsboro'?

If you should want any quantity of boards, either clear or merchantable, scantling, or any other lumber, let me know it soon and they shall be procured. What the price is this year I do not know. Last year boards and scantling were six and seven dollars per thousand; clear boards, from nine to eleven dollars. I should imagine this years prices will not differ much from this. A vessel of 100 tons may be charter'd for Philadelphia and back for 400 dollars. Such vessels carry 80 thousand of boards—a less siz'd vessel would not be so œconomical.

I shall endeavour that my accounts in future shall be perfectly regular, as far as the nature of the business will admit, but a number of little incidental expences will naturally arise, for which vouchers cannot be obtain'd, and for which you must trust solely to the honor of your agent; and while I am that agent, I hope, in this respect, you will never have reason to say that your confidence has been misplaced.

The inhabitants in the different towns in this Commonwealth are very unanimously subscribing memorials to the House of Representatives, requesting and requiring to carry into effect the treaty with Great Britain. There is so much spirit here about this business that a single request would turn out 30 regiments of Yankees to enable the President to execute the laws of the Union, let the obstruction to this execution arise from mobs within doors or without.

You shall hear from me again the moment I git under way.

Adieu and believe me ever, very respectfully,

Your friend and obedient servant

DAVID COBB

Honorable William Bingham

*Bingham to Knox, Philadelphia, 12 May 1796 [KP]*⁶

Philadelphia May 12th 1796

My dear General:

I have to acknowledge receipt of several of your letters. It has given me very great pleasure to find that your other child, which had been seized with the afflicting disorder, had escaped.⁷

I have shown Mr. Baring the estimate of the first cost of the lands, extracted from my books, on which he may form an opinion of the residuary profits, which he ought to propose in a purchase of a portion of your share. This amount with interest untill the 1st May is \$232,115, in which is not included the ballance on Shaw's purchase, nor any part of the settling duties, his share of which in our contract he agrees eventually to pay. These charges embrace the lower tract, including the private purchases, which with Shaws demands, will extend to about \$240,000 which if there should be 1,200,000 acres included therein, would be exactly 20 cents per acre, or 1/6. The price he has given is 3/4.

The ballance that is due to Duer, including the payments of 1795 and 1796, will be near the proportion of what should be charged to the Kennebec tract, which with 120,000 dollars to be paid on that account to the State, and 37,500 dollars, which will probably be forfeited for settling duties, will constitute the cost of that portion of our purchase, which will be nearly 200,000 dollars, or 20 cents per acre. In this estimate no part of the various disbursements that have occurred, are charged to the Kennebec tract. There is to be deducted the residuary profits of a certain quantity stipulated to be given for services that several persons have rendered to the concern.

Under all these circumstances you can form an opinion of what Mr. Baring ought to give in reason, if he should agree to purchase. I suppose the price he has paid, will in some respect, be his guide, but he will probably deem a proportion of your share to be less valuable than an equal quantity of his purchase, as it is incumbered with a certain extent of residuary profits to others.

You may rest assured of my making every exertion in order to compleat your views, both with respect to Mr. Baring and in every other manner that can tend to promote their success.

I could not propose to him the engagement of this concern producing him 20 per cent per annum for a certain number of years. He is too deli-

⁶ KP, xxxix. 64.

⁷ In a letter dated Boston, 24 April 1796, in BP, Knox writes of the death of two of his children from putrid sore throat.

cate and high minded to accept such terms. I will shortly write to you the result.

I wish Mr. Baring may be favorably impressed with the Eastern Country, in order that he may induce his friends to embark largely in its improvement. He means to visit almost every part of the United States and I feel interested in his not having his attention diverted to any other object.

It is really fortunate that he entered into this speculation, for I began almost to despair of being enabled to induce any men of property to engage in a concern therein, which indisposition on the part of those who had been applied to, would in a short time, have induced the necessity of making large sacrifices to obtain funds, for I am fully in sentiment with you, that no compensation can be an equivalent for a continuation in scenes of difficulty and distress, which I will take care never to experience in the same manner, and to the same extent, that I have lately been exposed to.

Previous to making an offer of the Kennebeck lands I wish to raise the reputation of the country.

I think an attention to the improvement of the Kennebeck lands will be a sufficient occupation of time, especially if the upper tract should be placed in a train of settlement, at the same time with the lower. What price do you suppose it would be proper to ask for the Kennebeck lands? At the rate of profit which lands have usually brought, purchased at such a time, a much higher price might be expected than what we shall probably procure.

In making a calculation on Shaws offer, I find the deduction about 20 per cent, which I do not think sufficient, but which I believe I must comply with. Are the conveyances ready to be made, and have they been examined by counsel, and does it appear that the title is unquestionably good, and that there is no mortgage or judgment against the property? These titles will undergo a rigid examination by counsel employed here, by Mr. Baring. However, on all these points relative to the private purchases, you are acquainted with the necessary documents to be forwarded, in order to make a conveyance.

The note of Hill is one that is attached by the creditors of Duer. I cannot pay that without paying those belonging to the Bank of New York.⁸

I expect in a few days the business to be terminated—the money is ready and has been for some time.

I suppose you will be at Boston in the course of this month when the

⁸ In a letter dated Boston, 6 May 1796, in BP, Knox informed Bingham that he was being threatened by William Hill with a suit for nonpayment of one of the notes to Duer which Hill had come into possession of.

legislature will meet, as your presence will probably be necessary, at the time of arranging the purchase of the upper tract.

I shall trouble you to receive the deed from the persons who hold it in escrow, for the payment due in June, the amount of which I will remit you by the next post to pay the Treasurer.

If General Cobb will confer with the Treasurer, perhaps they may agree on some person who they will qualify to take the census. I am fearful the sheriff or any public officer would not be sufficiently attentive to the enumeration. Oeconomy should at the same time be consulted.

I am with affectionate esteem

Yours sincerely

WM. BINGHAM

General Knox

Bingham to Cobb, Philadelphia, 16 May 1796 [CP]

My dear General:

Philadelphia May 16th 1796

I have received your letter of the 30th April. It has been peculiarly unfortunate that you should have been seized with so serious an indisposition, which has lingered about you so long, General Knox writing me by this days post that you have not recovered therefrom. I hope this misfortune will no longer impede your views, as your presence would be very requisite in the first arrangement of this business, as it regards the distribution of the lands to the settlers etc.

I am sorry that Swan of New London has not returned you a favorable answer and accepted your offers. If some few persons of influence, and who were generally known, could once experience any considerable advantages from speculating in these lands, it would produce a most charming effect. It would not be a useless sacrifice to induce some of them to engage at much lower than the usual prices. I am sorry that your measures to arrest the progress of lumbering have not proved so successful as you had reason to suppose. There is no necessity of having Van Berckel's power of agency in order to act in this business, as the townships sold to him, on condition of making certain specified payments, have reverted to the original owners, from an absolute failure on his part in the fulfillment of the terms. This is the decided opinion of our best lawyers. No title was ever given. The deeds were lodged in escrow, to take effect on exhibiting receipts from me for certain installments being paid, which have never been paid.

A power of attorney was given by me to Madame Leval, which was revokable at pleasure. If it should have been recorded, and you should think it necessary, I will formally revoke it, for I view these townships to be as much within the bounds of my property, and under your management, as any part of the District.

General Knox will further explain to you the state of the case.

I had solicited Dr. Ruston for a power to you to prevent deprivations on the lumber of No. 4 and the rest of his property. He left this power at my house, inclosed to you, after which he took it back, and I have heard nothing further from him since. I will renew my application to him. He has offered his lands for sale to Mr. Baring. What are they worth in your estimation and what incumbrances are they incumbered with?

When I have made my final arrangements with Mr. Baring, I can inform you how far I can accommodate you with the advance you wish. I will certainly make every possible effort to oblige you. I have accepted your bill for 1,000 dollars, in part of the 1,500, to be drawn before your departure for Gouldsborough.

I am obliged to you for your kind offer of supplying me with any quantity of boards I may stand in need of. I do not think I shall want any the present season.

When I mentioned to you in a former letter the mode in which the accounts were to be kept, it was meant to preserve regularity, in the keeping them. You are debited with all the monies drawn by yourself or remitted to you. In order to be freed from this charge it will naturally occur to you that you must forward an account of your expenditures, in order to be credited therefor, which will ballance your account. You will naturally place these charges under different heads of expenditure, according to their nature. All expences previous to your last journey here, are to be charged to the old concern, those subsequent to that period, to the new association. You will please to keep this idea in view, as it will be necessary to conform thereto in keeping my accounts.

I shall take my departure for the District about the beginning of June, accompanied by Mrs. B. and my children, and a few friends, I imagine two to three.

Mr. Baring is more and more pleased with his purchase, and I have no doubt will be fully gratified when he has more intimately become acquainted with it.

The same dispositions that appear so universally to have influenced the New Englanders, relative to the treaty, have pervaded the other states, and the party in opposition to it have in a great respect lost the confidence

of the people, by the very means which they had adopted to secure it.

I sincerely wish the speedy recovery of your health and am with regard and esteem

Your friend and obedient humble servant

WM. BINGHAM

General Cobb

Knox to Bingham, Boston, 25 May 1796 [BP]⁹

Boston 25 May 1796

My dear Sir:

I have to acknowledge the receipt of your favors of the 16th and 19th¹ instant, the latter covering a draft of the Bank of the United States on the branch bank of this place for 30,000 dollars. Instantly upon receiving the draft I endorsed and paid it to the Treasurer of this Commonwealth, and took up your sole bond payable the 1st of June ensuing for 22,000 dollars and your and the late Thomas Russells joint bond for 8,000 dollars payable at the same period. As this business was performed out of the usual office hours, and we had no opportunity of having recourse to the contract, and as he was then about leaving the town for a day or two, he did not make the deduction for the anticipated payment of seven days but he promised that if upon examination it was right, it should be done. I would have transmitted you the bonds with the receipt thereof but they must be exhibited to the persons holding the deeds in escrow in order to receive the same upon the arrival of your power for that purpose.

Mr. Shaws deeds were drawn by Mr. Hall² who was General Jacksons lawyer and therefore they are right. Shaw has written for a certificate from the registrar of there being no existing incumbrance. He expects in pursuance of my promise his money about the 1st of June. He is not bound after that time.

Our legislature meets this day. The business of the million of the back tract will therefore I hope be adjusted in ten days—at least it shall not want urging by me.

It is expected the members from the lower counties will bring the subordinate deeds to General Jackson. Your mortification is not greater than mine upon the procrastinations of this affair.

⁹ There is a copy of this letter in KP, xxxix. 78.

¹ These letters are in KP, xxxix. 67 and 72. In them Bingham announces his plans for his coming trip to Maine.

² Presumably Joseph Hall, who, among other things, acted as James Swan's London agent. See H. C. Rice, "James Swan," *New England Quarterly*, x. 475.

General Cobb has recovered in a great degree and is here a convalescent. He is going to Connecticut River for the triple purpose of his health, his wives desire to see relations and his having some business to arrange with several people respecting the sale of townships. He will probably set out with his family for Gouldsbrough by the 10th or 12th of next month. Already he has sent his goods and chattels. He will arrange with the Treasurer or the Committee the evidence requisite respecting settlers.

I shall anxiously expect on Saturday next a definite answer to my requests from Mr. Baring. If favorable, all will be well. If otherwise, I shall be embarrassed exceedingly and detained here, or be obliged to go to New York to seek the necessary accommodation to extricate my friends. But I flatter myself that you and Mr. Baring will be so good as to devise some means, either temporary or permanent, to comply with the engagements on my account by Messrs. Anthony and Hodgdon.

With respect to Mrs. B., the young ladies, and the gentlemen of your party visiting us at St. Georges, I can only say that it is ardently desired by Mrs. K. and myself. We even think you will be pretty well accommodated. We shall be highly gratified with the visit and not a little mortified if it does not take place, as we shall regard it as an indication of a want of disposition. Feeling as we do to your family, this would wound deeply, but precludes our saying a word more. If the water should be an objection, it would be a beautiful run from Portland, of not more than 8 hours, fair wind—not more than 24 hours from this town. That time insured for any turn [?]

Yours truly
H. KNOX

Knox to Bingham, Boston, 30 May 1796 [BP]

My dear Sir: Boston 30 May 1796

I before acknowledged, to wit on the 25th and 27th,³ that I had received and paid the 30,000 dollars to the Treasurer of this Commonwealth on the 24th instant. He is to make an allowance for the anticipated payments of seven days. But I have not been able to take up the deed for want of your power, which I have not received.

It is inexpressibly painful to me, that I have been constrained to trouble you to endeavor to obtain for me the accommodation I so much need. I rest

³ In this letter, which is in BP, Knox reports that a new memorial to the legislature on the subject of the "back tract" has been presented.

upon your exertions and success, and I sincerely hope from your last, that the next post will relieve me from that anxiety under which I have been laboring for some time past.

A permanently grateful sense of your kindness will be entertained by me.

General Cobb is almost recovered. He will return to Taunton tomorrow in order to clear out definitely, and return here in a few days and embark for Gouldsbrough with his family.

Apros Shaws money, I promised it to him by the 1st of June.

The legislature have as yet done no business, having been organizing themselves for that purpose. Tomorrow the Governor will make his speech. I am in the mean time taking the necessary steps to obtain the reduction of the contract of the back tract to a million or thereabouts, and of which I see no cause to doubt success.

The legislature will probably continue in session until the beginning of July. During that time it will be difficult to procure suitable accommodations for Mrs. Bingham and the young ladies in a lodging house. The gentlemen of the party must probably be accommodated in another house. Lodging houses here, are not of the first class. General Jackson and myself will endeavor to make the best arrangement the town can afford, only let him or me, while I stay, [know] one week before hand.

When you return, and make some considerable stay here, a furnished house would be the best arrangement.

A question arises whether you will embark here or proceed by land? Any wind from the south round westerly to N.W., would carry a vessel from this to St Georges in 24 hours. One night upon the water is all that would probably be required. From Portland with a fair wind it is about 8 or 10 hours run.

A good vessel will be an *essential requisite* to the comfort of the gentlemen on the visit to the lands eastward of St. Georges. The vessel must be their principal home in their excursions up the rivers and on the sea coasts.

A vessel, a sloop, perfect in my opinion, offers at this moment for this purpose, having a master of pleasant temper and manners, a Captain Weeks, the vessel which carried my family the last year to St Georges. She then was a Portland packet, to which place she belongs, since which she has been to Europe. She has an excellent spacious and high cabin exclusively of four separate state rooms, about 93 tons burthen. The price for such a vessel is pretty high—£100 or 333 33/100 dollars per month, all expences, pilotage etc., included. The question is shall I engage her? Write me or General Jackson definitely upon the subject. She sails for

Portland in a day or two, and I have promised the Captain an answer as soon as possible. Indeed, I am very much tempted to engage her, well knowing how much she will be wanted. She and she only must be had. She is equal, if not superior, to the best of the Rhode Island packets.

Yours sincerely

H. KNOX

The Honorable Mr. Bingham

Bingham to Knox, Philadelphia, 1 June 1796 [KP]⁴

My dear General:

Philadelphia June 1st 1796

I have received your two letters of the 25 and 27 ultimo. I wrote you some days ago and mentioned that Mr. Baring had been under the necessity of declining the proposals I made in your behalf relative to the loan or concern in your share of eventual profit.⁵

I informed you of the reasons which I supposed must have activated him on this occasion—the immense scarcity of money in England and the nature of the concern, including so long a period before it can be terminated. Besides he does not seem to have a strong desire of being connected with the Kennebec tract. I have tried every means in my power to procure you the facility you have occasion for, but have not been able to accomplish it, such is the great demand for money at present.

I do not think it prudent to push Mr. Baring further on the subject, as it may have an unfavorable tendency, as relative to a future application, which under a change of some existing circumstances, will be probably successfull to the extent of your wishes.

In the mean while I will engage to procure for you on a credit of six months, to be then punctually repaid, the sum of eight thousand dollars, as it will then be wanted by the party. I will pay the same to Mr. Anthony or Mr. Hodgdon, as you may think proper. As for the remaining part of your engagements to these gentlemen, perhaps they may find some method of extending the period untill you can procure additional resources, or perhaps you may be enabled to arrange the business at Boston.

To enable us to free ourselves from our embarassments, I think it would be proper to adopt some certain mode of selling the whole, or at

⁴ KP, xxxix. 87–88.

⁵ In a letter dated Boston, 6 June 1796, in BP, Knox replied that the news of Baring's refusal had left him prostrate and that his financial affairs were in a truly desperate state. For Baring's reasons, see Baring to Bingham, Philadelphia, 18 May 1796 in BP.

least one half of the Kennebeck tract. It is to be recollected that when the purchase of the back tract is compleated, there will be due to the State £50,000 more than will be received from Mr. Baring, to which is to be added £35,000 being a ballance due on the Kennebeck tract.

In order to prevent this property being sold at a very reduced price, in order to furnish the means of payment, it is absolutely necessary that preparatory measures should be taken to secure a favorable sale.

There are such vast quantities of land at market, and some of the great speculators are so deeply involved, that they will be compelled to make sales, altho they may sacrifice their property for one half of what it cost.

Besides, a great disposition exists in Congress to tax landed property, which must tend essentially to undervalue it.

Besides, by the purchase of the additional million in the back tract, an immense body of land, to be placed in a progressive state of improvement, is connected together, and upon that object, we ought to devote an unceasing and undivided attention. If another settlement of the same kind was to be undertaken at Kennebeck, it would require an equal portion of trouble and time in the superintendence, which would be more than any possible consideration of profit could induce me to give to any object whatsoever.

Under all these circumstances I think it would be prudent to take the most prompt and active measures for the disposal of these lands. It will be first proper to raise their reputation by procuring a description from accurate personal observation as Morris's account of them has made a very unfavorable impression.

The Senate adjourned yesterday. I think we shall take our departure from hence, about the 8 to 10th instant. We shall probably stay at New York for some days.

Mrs. B. joins me in affectionate compliments to Mrs. Knox and your daughter, and believe me to be very sincerely

Yours etc.

WM. BINGHAM

General Knox

P.S. I observe that the period allotted for accepting Shaw's proposals will expire in a few days. Altho the offer is so very advantageous, I do not know whether it will be in my power to provide the means to enable me to accept it, without having recourse to bank discounts, to be continually renewed, every sixty days, which I most cordially detest. I am highly pleased with General Cobb's recovery. It would have greatly disconcerted

our views, if any accident had happened to him, which would have deprived us of his assistance.

W. B.

*Bingham to Knox, Philadelphia, 3 June 1796 [KP]*⁶

My dear General:

Philadelphia June 3 1796

I have received your favor of the 30 May. My last will have informed you of the ineffectual result of my endeavours to procure you the facilities you were so desirous of obtaining and of my success in engaging an accommodation to the extent of 8,000 dollars, for about six months.

I find that you suppose no difficulty will occur in getting the legislature to agree to limit the contract for the back tract, to one million of acres. I hope that will be the case, as I should not be willing to extend my engagements further than such a purchase will amount to, which with the settling duties and interest will be £50,000 more than will be received from Mr. Baring.

I know no mode of procuring the amount but from the sale of the Kennebeck tract, which will then leave our possessions in the District of Maine entirely compact and under good direction and a well digested system of settlement.

But the difficulty is to find the purchasers that will make proper payments and give a good price for the lands. I am really fearfull that we shall be under the necessity of sacrificing this property, as I do not know where we shall find a market for the article. In this part of the Union, land speculations have been pushed to such an extravagant height, that I can foresee nothing but distress in the extreme, perhaps ruin, to attend them. There is no expectation therefore of diverting any part of the active capital towards such objects, as much more than can be spared for such purposes have been already absorbed by them. To the southward there is no money and to the eastward I believe they are in the same predicament, and possess the rage [?] of land speculation.

I am afraid Europe is our only resource and from my communications with that country and my efforts to sell lands, I do not derive hopes of very flattering success. However, we will converse more freely on that point, when we have the pleasure of meeting.

I am much obliged to you for your kind offer in assisting the party in procuring accommodations in Boston. Our movements cannot be deter-

⁶ KP, xxxix. 89.

mined with precision whilst there are ladies to be consulted. It is not as yet fixed what shall be our stay in New York but I rather suppose a very short one. I shall take the liberty of writing from thence to General Jackson (as I do not suppose you will be in Boston) and requesting his aid on the occasion.

It will not be worth while to engage the packet boat you mention, as it is possible we may continue our route by land, or at least as far as Portland. I rather think the ladies will prefer this mode of conveyance.

As for the gentlemen, they must accommodate themselves to such vessels as offer, in their visits on the coast and up the rivers. If they can obtain one that is very convenient, so much the better. If not, they will be satisfied. However, when we arrive at Boston, we will determine the point.

I suppose the Portland packet can be obtained, on giving a certain previous notice which I think it would be proper to engage.

I do not suppose that any letters you will write to me after receipt of this, will meet me at Philadelphia.

Yours sincerely and affectionately

WM. BINGHAM

General Knox

Knox to Bingham, Boston, 20 June 1796 [BP]

My dear Sir:

Boston 20th June 1796

I have learned that you set out from Philadelphia on the 13th. I presume you will stay in New York a week or ten days. We shall sail tomorrow bag and baggage. I have been divided in my opinion whether to remain until you arrive or precede you, but as I hope your stay here will be short at this time, extending your visit here on your return, and as my affairs there pressingly demand my presence, I have determined it advisable to go on. If you should determine to stay here some time now, I think you had better occupy my house which I have taken for the next year. It will have all the necessary articles of furniture. But if you should now stay only a few days, it will be best to lodge at Mrs. Archbalds which are secured for you and Mrs. Bingham and family. You will act as you judge proper. But I think your longest stay will be most agreeable on your return. Present our respects to Mrs. Bingham and the young ladies. We shall impatiently expect you at St Georges. I shall write you again and leave the letter with General Jackson. Let him know the day you will be in this town. You will find him all zeal, truth and affection. The deeds will be ready.

The affair of the back Million is again referred to the next session.⁷ No legislature ought to sell land. The committee of the two houses were unanimous in their report, which was accepted by the Senate and sent down to the House. There some underwork prevented its acceptance. The arguments against it were: that the proprietors or purchasers had had several years to examine the thing, and would, were there not some hidden cause, execute the contract; that time therefore must be afforded the legislature to look into the business.

The advocates for the measure stated that the land relinquished was of the best quality, and that its value would be trebled and quadrupled before the periods of payment came round; that the advantage was entirely on the side of the State, and that therefore the proposition ought to be accepted; that the original contract by the evidence of itself and the Committee contemplated only one million; that the present contract never could be executed as the land surveyed extended itself probably into the British government and the north boundary was unascertained, assumed, and would be disputed. But suspicion had been let loose by the designing that it was a trick, and the House were deaf to all argument and therefore it was referred.

The question now is where is the injury? The contract is valid, not an idea to the contrary. If it be expedient to execute the whole, it may be done. If not, we shall get a million or relinquish it altogether. The legislature have suspended the operation. I think the sort of hold we have of this contract is just the thing you would please to have shaped for yourself.

Yours affectionately

H. KNOX

Compliments to the gentlemen of your party. Lodging will be procured for them in this town. Do not suffer one to stay behind. You must have the vessel I mentioned to you. I expect her every moment from Portland, newly painted.

Bingham to Cobb, Boston, 28 June 1796 [CP]

Boston June 28th 1796

My dear General:

We have arrived thus far on our route to the District of Maine, where we were fortunate in finding General Knox had not taken his departure,

⁷ Apparently the legislature went as far as to draw up a resolve on this business empowering the Land Committee to modify the contract, but never got around to passing it. See the copy of this resolve, dated 7 June 1796, in BP.

as his arrangements previous to our arrival have rendered our situation, as it regards accommodations, more agreeable than I expected. He sailed from hence with his family two days ago with a fair wind, but it changed immediately afterwards, and I am apprehensive he will have a tedious passage. My personal intention is to continue my journey by land, as far as Wiscasset, and there embark for St. Georges, as the ladies are very averse to the sea, from the sufferings they experienced in their voyage from New York to New Port. A packet boat will be ready to receive us at Wiscasset, which we shall retain, in order to visit the different rivers and sea coast situations in our territory and its neighbourhood.

I was extremely pleased at hearing that you had recovered from your late severe attack. I wrote you some time ago, and forwarded to you answers to the various questions you addressed to me relative to the improvement and settlement of our lands, as well on the part of Mr. Baring as myself.

I imagine your indisposition prevented your reply and any observations thereon. I am very anxious to know what arrangements you have recently taken, in order to carry into effect our objects, relative to settlement, and whether you have entered into any engagements with influential individuals for the sale of lands, either of an absolute or conditional nature. Indeed, all species of information, that is in the least interesting on this subject, I will thank you to communicate. Mr. Baring is very inquisitive on all these points, for he is desirous of making known to his friends, who are engaged in this purchase, the precise state and future prospects of their property.

I am waiting with great anxiety for the receipt of the conveyances you were to forward from Gouldsborough, for some of the private purchases, as I cannot make a deed to Mr. Baring until the exact quantity of the land can be ascertained, and untill the title can be exhibited. Near four months have elapsed since we fixed on the terms of our agreement, and it is not prudent to delay the proper measures to carry into legal effect the conditions we mutually stipulated. I am prevented during all the intermediate period, from receiving the amount of the sale, besides exposing the contract to the chance of accident and unforeseen events. I would willingly have paid the expence of an express, to have been dispatched for these documents.

I have accepted your two drafts on me dated the 14 and 16 instant in favor of M. M. Hays at ten days sight, one for 515 and the other for 453.33 dollars.

I have no letter of advice and therefore do not know whether I am to

charge them to the old or the new account. You will oblige me by framing an account current, in which you will give credit for all the monies you received, for expences previous to the 15 February last, and debit the establishment with the various expenditures, made from time to time. Otherwise, no entries can be made, in the books appropriated for keeping these accounts.

It is more peculiarly requisite at present, for the gentlemen who have been recently connected in this business, are very precise on all these points, from their mercantile habits, and are in the practice at stated periods, of balancing their books, so as not to make the difference of a farthing.

I mention these circumstances from a conviction that it will give you pleasure to know them, as you will be naturally anxious to accommodate our views, on all such points.

I am with sincere regard

Dear General

Your friend and humble servant

WM. BINGHAM

P.S. Our party consists of Mrs. B. and the Miss B.'s, Miss Willing, General de Noailles, Mr. Baring, and Mr. Richards, an Englishman, who is a friend to Mr. Baring.⁸

The excursion of the Bingham's and their party to the District of Maine in the summer of 1796 was a major undertaking; indeed, when all the preparations are considered, it assumes the proportions of an important military operation. Though the primary purpose of the expedition was business, the presence of the ladies gave to the outing the air of a party of pleasure; and Baring's prediction that the "procession [would] make a noise in the New England states" proved, if anything, an understatement. If the wealthy Philadelphians, accustomed to every comfort at home, could be properly provided for in Maine, it would be striking proof of the advanced state of civilization in the eastern country.

The party went first to New York, where, after spending a

⁸ Bingham's two daughters, Ann and Maria, were both in their teens. Miss Abby Willing was Mrs. Bingham's youngest sister. For John Richards, who was soon to become co-agent with Cobb in the management of the Maine property, see above, p. 653, note 2. Apparently Henry Baring planned to come—see Bingham to Knox, Philadelphia, 4 May 1796, KP, xxxix. 57—but was unable to do so.

few days, they proceeded to Newport, Rhode Island, by water and unfortunately experienced a rough passage. "The ladies suffered exceedingly by sea sickness," wrote Bingham to Knox, "and which has impressed on them a very serious dislike to water excursions." Bingham hoped they would forget their troubles; otherwise, he despaired of ever getting them to Montpelier by water.⁹

On 22 June the party arrived in Boston, where, with the aid of Knox, they were able to secure comfortable accommodations.¹ Since Bingham and Baring still had several business transactions to complete, the expedition remained until the middle of July, before proceeding farther eastward. At long last the deeds for the purchases from individuals had been collected, and the presumption is that Bingham was finally able to complete the conveyance of half of these properties to Baring at this time.² The two gentlemen also engaged Harrison Gray Otis to try to untangle the contract with Madame de Leval and Benjamin Walker.³ Finally, about the middle of July, the party moved on by stage to Portland, where they were met by the Portland packet *Mercury*, Captain Weeks, who took them the remaining distance to Thomaston by water.⁴

From the moment of his first setting foot in America, Alexander Baring had been unusually conscientious in reporting to his superiors in England all that he did and saw. When it came to writing up the excursion to Maine, however, he outdid himself and produced sixty-eight manuscript pages of description of the

⁹ See Bingham to Knox, Newport, 20 June 1796, KP, xxxix. 104.

¹ See Knox's letter to Cobb, Montpelier, 6 July 1796, in CP, and 17 July 1796, *Bangor Historical Magazine*, III. 119. Apparently the party stayed with Mrs. Archbald, as suggested by Knox (see above, p. 760). This was presumably Mrs. Francis Archbald, who kept a boardinghouse on Bowdoin Square, where Henry Jackson was the star boarder. See the Boston Directory for 1796.

² In his letter to Knox of 20 June cited above, Bingham expresses his hopes that the papers necessary for the conveyance to Baring can be made ready. See also Bingham to H. Jackson, New York, 17 June 1796, KP, xxxix. 103.

³ See above, p. 171.

⁴ See Knox's letter to Cobb of 6 July cited above. See also two undated vouchers in BP, both receipts from Joseph Weeks of Portland: the first for £4/3/8 for cheese, chickens, butter, and other commodities for the Maine excursion; the second for \$533.33 for the hire of the *Mercury* from 20 July to 30 August 1796.

eastern country. His account of eastern Maine in the year 1796 must rank with those of Talleyrand and Liancourt as classics of their kind.

*Baring to Hope and Company, Philadelphia,
3 December 1796 [BaP]*⁵

Gentlemen,

Philadelphia 3 December 1796

I have not written any regular and general letter to you concerning your speculation in Maine since the one you have acknowledged receipt of and replied to.⁶ It is my intention to give you by the present all the communications that may be interesting and necessary as they occur to me, in as much order as possible, in doing which I may perhaps repeat what has before been written, which, as I have no copies of my letters, you will please to excuse. I have duly received all the letters I have been favored with: say those from Mr. H.H. of the 29 April and 13th August; from Mr. J.W.H. of the 30 April, 10 August and 7th October; and from my father down to the 20th September inclusive.⁷ You had re-

⁵ Baring did not get around to writing the Hopes about the excursion to Maine until December. This letter is, therefore, out of chronological order.

⁶ There is no letter from Baring to the Hopes in BaP between the one dated 26 May 1796 (printed above, pp. 643-670) and a letter to Henry Hope on incidental matters, dated Philadelphia, 29 November 1796.

⁷ There are three copies of letters to Baring during this period in BaP. The first, dated 21 April 1796, is from Baring and Company and was presumably written by Sir Francis. In it Sir Francis expresses himself as "perfectly satisfied" with all that Alexander has done and willing to depend on his son's judgment in everything. Since "we have pitched our tent in the District of Maine," he advises against further purchases elsewhere, though he is willing to consider additional property down east. He wonders if the large bodies of water on the Maine lands do not make them swampy and foggy and urges Alexander to be very careful when he goes into the woods, lest his health be undermined. The complexion of Americans, according to Sir Francis, proves how unhealthy most of the country is. He closes by urging that the present proprietors keep close control of the property and not "admit the slightest shade of democracy" by allowing the agents any real power.

The second letter is an undated one from Henry Hope, possibly the one of 29 April mentioned above. In it Hope also approves Alexander's actions and expresses his eagerness to read the young man's first-hand impressions after the summer excursion down east. He emphasizes the need for keeping careful accounts, though, he adds, "we suppose the staff officers [Knox and Cobb] too good military men to be good accountants." He closes his letter with comments on the American political situation, agreeing with Alexander's estimate of the United States government and "of its permanency, at least as long as will answer our purposes." He supposes the choice of Washington's successor "must occasion some bustle."

The third letter, presumably from Sir Francis Baring and dated 22 July 1796, is

ceived and digested my dispatches by the *William Penn* and I felt myself most gratefully impressed with the honor conferred on me by the uniformly handsome and flattering expressions of approbation you bestow, both on my intentions and actions. I found a considerable difficulty in explaining to you to my satisfaction the speculation in its different points of view and I am now pretty confident of having succeeded in as far as I could have expected from the very judicious and apposite remarks which my letters have drawn from you and which prove you to be as much au fait of the real state of the business as, considering the natural and irremovable impediments to such information, I could have expected to have made you.

I shall not make a regular reply to the general remarks and queries your letters contain. Many are antecedent to my letter by the *Penn* and are answered by it. On the others I shall touch in the course of my letter, having them all marked down before me, and I shall take care that nothing essential be omitted, premising only, to encourage their continuation, that they have been importantly usefull on several occasions. I thought it not difficult to form a good idea of a new country but the real sight of it and the reflections that occur on the spot opened a total new scene, reversed many former opinions, and confirmed others to perfect conviction. I will give you my opinion of the country in a narative of our excursion and will thank you to follow me on the small map.

We left Philadelphia the 13th June with four ladies, Mr. Bingham, Richards and Viscount de Noailles. The latter, I must observe to you, has no connections or communications either with Mr. Bingham or myself, but he is a necessary family appendage and also an agreeable travelling companion. Richards you will recollect went at my desire to see the country previous to his engaging to settle in it. We staid a few days at New York, went from there through the Sound to Newport in Rhode Island by water and from thence by land to Providence and Boston, where we again made a stay of some days and arrived at Portland in Maine (the first place marked in the corner of the map)⁸ on the 18th July. The part of the province of Maine from the New Hampshire line to Portland is settled very thickly and the cultivation equal to most and superior to many parts of the State of New Hampshire. There are several small sea ports where very considerable business is carried on with the

a review of what has been done to date, with some general suggestions as to sales, additional purchases, and expenditures for improvements.

⁸ The map referred to from time to time in this letters appears to be the small printed one, a copy of which is in BaP. See above, p. 646, note 7.

West Indies and Europe, particularly from Sawko and Kenebunk, where they make their importations of foreign articles direct and not through Boston as they used to do and still do in many parts. The exports consist chiefly in lumber and agricultural produce with which assorted cargoes are made up for the West Indies.

Portland is the most important place in Maine. The harbour is very fine and thought the best between that and Newport in Rhode Island. The trade of the country enters chiefly there; it contains about three thousand inhabitants and many of them very respectable and rich. The place will probably be the capital on the separation of the District from the State of Massachusetts. Its situation is one of the most beautiful I have seen on the continent and the lands for a considerable distance round it sell readily from 10 to 20 dollars the acre. The road to Portland and even as far as the Kennebeck is very good and accommodations for travelling as far as the former place equal to those in any part of the union. Further than Kennebeck there is no carriage road but General Knox is exerting himself to open one and promises that it will be fit for travelling next year to Penobscot Bay. This prevented our seeing the Kennebeck settlements which are very considerable and undergoing rapid improvements all the way up the river to the margin of Bingham's tract.

We embarked at Portland in a Portland packet which we hired and arrived the next morning before General Knox's door on St. Georges River; the distance by water is near sixty miles. Knox's house is situated on the river side where it becomes narrow, precisely where the foot of the letter T of Thomaston is on the map. The situation is a fine one and Richards will shew you a drawing he took of it. I must here give you a short account of General Knox's position and property. The Waldo patent was a royal grant of a tract forty miles square to the late General Waldo. Knox inherited the chief part through his wife and bought out the others heirs so that he is sole proprietor. On this land, as on all lands where the proprietors pay no attention to it, a number of people had set themselves down for many years without right or title. These people are very emphatically called Squatters. The part Knox took in the revolution, in which he distinguished himself greatly, saved his property from sharing the fate of all large royal grants and it was conserved to him and confirmed by the State. Knox became Secretary of War but not being able to support his family by his salary, which is as of all public officers very small, he wisely resolved to make the most of his property in Maine by his own personal residence and exertions. He went on his lands in the year '86 for the first time and found all the good situations on the waters

taken up, with a united disposition on the part of the farmers to hold their lands and set him at defiance. After several attempts he convened them all together at his house to the number of 800, spoke to them in a firm but friendly manner and offered to confirm all their titles on their paying 4/ New England currency the acre or $\frac{2}{3}$ of a dollar, with a long credit, notwithstanding every acre taken up was worth ten dollars. The people were so pleased with his treatment that notwithstanding they had all leagued to oppose him, in a very short time six hundred of the eight signed. He gave them a fixed time and then raised his price to two dollars and of the two hundred refractory, one hundred and fifty have already compounded at that price, and others are coming in daily. I never saw in my life so completely the effects of good management, for not only he has made the people pay for their lands but is universally liked. In this instance it was not the question how much should be paid but whether his patent should be valid at all and if he got only a barleycorn, his object was attained, as the settlers were in fact an advantage to him and made the two or three hundred thousand acres which were left more valuable than the whole patent was before. The inhabitants of this country are a very honest well disposed lot and I think the compromise proves them to have very correct ideas of property and it hardly could be thought surprizing that in a new country, where people must be more out of the reach of the arm of the law than in an old one, some opposition should at first be made, by settlers who had occupied waste lands for near thirty years without interference, to the introduction of a royal patent for forty square miles to sweep away all their property and that at a time when royal grants were not much respected and many of the best organized states in the union had made use of pretexts to set them aside. The history of this arrangement is highly creditable, both to the country and to Knox, whose conduct in every respect has been well judged and masterly.

The country round about Knox is pretty well settled, though the soil is but midling, and you can count at least thirty houses from his windows. Thomaston is a neat village of near seventy houses and a church, and Warren, which is about six miles further up the river has upwards of twice that number. I find the people in general nearly equal in information, manners and comforts of life to those of the old New England states. This is an advantage resulting from the easy water communications with all parts, which in fact brings them nearer the old countries than any back lands at not one third the real distance. You find a newspaper in almost every farm house and seldom meet anybody who has not a tolerable idea of European politics and a very good one of his own. I

was much surprized by the appearance of a congregation at Warren church. The dress of the women was really distinguished by taste and offered by no means so great a contrast with that of the large towns as any part of England six miles distant from a large town would do. There is not (nor indeed is there in any part of America) the slightest provincial idiom or pronunciation in their language; every person can read and write and the village of Warren has even a circulating library. These otherwise trivial circumstances are descriptive of the character of the people and you will observe that they are not forced by the settlement of speculators among them as in the Genisee and the back parts of this state but the spontaneous result of common New England settling emigrators. In the Genisee many people of information have been introduced but the bulk of settlers are ignorant and destitute of all ideas of morality, but in Maine Knox is the first gentleman resident who comes among them that I know of and their manners are of their own creating.

The character of the people in Maine is nearly the same throughout, verging of course more on refinement and civilization as parts of the country are more or less settled and society formed. I dwelt considerably in my last letter on the advantages of character in the New England states in preference to that of the southward and westward, in which I am more and more confirmed.⁹ The New England settlers are the only I wish for; whenever they are collected together in a small society and the bare necessities of life are acquired, their first wants are a church and school. The German and Irish settlers to the westward never dream of such things even as a luxury and there are many large towns in Pennsylvania where they are not found. The necessity of religion may be a speculative question in old countries, but I am sure it is perfectly indispensable in new ones, where you must depend more on the clergyman than the constable for the protection of your property, and, where the mass of the people are called in republics to act as self governors, nothing but information and morality can insure society from those incongruities which we see a want of their deity produce. This difference of manners and habits is distinguishable in all comparisons of the conduct of the New England and neighbouring states in a most striking manner and most particularly in their political conduct on great national questions. I shall another time have occasion to say more on the subject of this distinction, in which according to my ideas the future fate of this continent is wrapt up. At present it is sufficient for our subject to say that the New England character is that which is prevalent in our new colony and from its situation is likely

⁹ See above, pp. 663-664.

to continue. No sales by the State of Massachusetts are made without making the reserve of 1,250 acres per township for churches and schools, but this is at the public expence and not at that of the purchaser, as you imagined.

To return to General Knox's settlement, the house he has built is a very fine one and the whole of his stile rather bordering on magnificence. I think he is right in his calculations on this subject, although to himself it is an unnecessary expence. It attracts very much the attention of every part of the country. His house is talked of every where and is certainly equalled by nothing out of the large towns. He has besides being known for a man of refined manners and as a lover of society shewn the country to be a comfortable and agreeable one to inhabit and I am persuaded more strangers have visited it from curiosity the short time he has been there than in any ten years before. His house is altogether 120 feet by 40, including in the front piazzas of 20 feet on each side of the body of the building. He farms about 200 acres of land in high order as an example and carries on besides a lime kiln, brickmaking, shipbuilding, lumber trade, saw and grist mills, and a store for all imported articles. He breeds a vast number of horses and is excessively active in all sorts of projects such as cutting canals etc. For his own interest he does too much, as I believe he is a loser by most of his undertakings, but they are of vast advantage to his surrounding lands and to the country in general. The soil of his tract at a distance from the sea is fine and near his house he has discovered and works a vein of limestone which is very soluable and the more singular as it is not otherwise met with on any part of the Atlantic coast. The land on rivers and creeks is very valuable and worth certainly 10 or 20 dollars the acre. Knox estimates his back lands at 3 dollars but he is too enthusiastic with regard to his own property, tho' in detail it would sell for that and in many parts for much more. Upon the whole the property is really well managed and thriving, at the same time that Knox from being near us is of great benefit to our property.

We sent our packet round to Owls Head in Penobscot Bay, left our ladies at General Knox's,¹ and embarked with the General and our gen-

¹ While the gentlemen were away, the Reverend Paul Coffin called at Montpelier and wrote the following account of his visit.

August 15, 1796. "Dined at General Knox'. . . His House draws air beyond all the ventilators which I had before seen. I was almost frozen for three hours before we took dinner and plenty of wine. The General being absent, gone East, in a Portland Packet with Mr. Bingham, I dined with Mrs. Knox and her daughters, and Mrs. Bingham and her sister and daughter. We had a merry dinner, the little Misses talking French in a gay mood. Mrs. Bingham was sensible, had been in France, could



Mrs. William Bingham, the former Ann Willing

One of the "Party of Pleasure" which visited
the Maine Lands in the Summer of 1796

Sketch by Gilbert Stuart

tlement. Penobscot Bay is excessively fine and the islands in it offer many handsome scenes, the shore on all sides being very high. The navigation is very good and the coast as far as Gouldsboro' affords good anchoring ground all the way and a number of good harbours. It is a perfect inland navigation and in that respect as well as in beauty exceeds any part of the coasts of this continent. We sailed up the Bay as far as Winslow or Long Island, then struck down what is called Edgemogin Reach between Deer Island and the main, then between Duck and Cranbery Islands to Gouldsboro'. All the islands are well settled. Long Island is covered with farms and belongs to General Knox, who is to be paid 3 dollars the acre though worth much more.

At Gouldsboro' we found General Cobb, who accompanied us in all our excursions afterwards. Gouldsboro' being the first part of the purchase we were to see (for Bingham never saw any part of his lands before) we were looking forward to it with great impatience and I must confess the approach to it made me feel very unpleasantly indeed. The whole of the point is a white rock which presents the most barren object you can imagine and to add to the uncouthness of the scene some pine woods had been burnt just behind it, as is customary in clearing lands, which presented a singular contrast of white and black. Upon going further back we found good land, but the point itself is fit for nothing but a town, for which it is in every respect very well situated. If any part of the country fell short of my expectations, it was certainly Gouldsboro', for although soil for so small a spot is of no great consequence, yet as it is the place where our settlers will generally land, I could have wished it had not looked so frightfully barren, as it must have on them the effect it had on me. I rather expected to find more of a town and houses in better condition, instead of which there are not above three comfortable houses in it, one of which is Cobb's. Bingham was certainly deceived in his purchases there and I had no reason to repent that I had made no allowances in our bargain for houses, farm, etc. I have no doubt that this will in time become an important place. The country back is fine and the harbour very good, but more on account of its easy access and good anchoring than depth of water. This circumstance makes it a very convenient resort for the Bank fishing, which begins within sight of that part of the coast. One fisherman is established there² and I have no doubt of

talk of European politicks, and give the history of the family of the late King of France, etc. The General's house with double piazzas round the whole of it, etc. exceeded all I had seen . . ." *Coll. Me. Hist. Soc.*, IV. 326-327.

² Presumably the same fisherman mentioned by Cobb. See below, p. 808.

more following on proper encouragement being given by buying their cargoes and supplying them with their wants, the aid of capital being the most effectual assistance in a young country. In other parts of the township of Gouldsboro' there are good farms and particularly round the inlet of water touching the corner of No. 7.

We staid on our first visit but a short time at Gouldsboro', but the wind being fair sailed directly to the eastern extremity of our lands and entered Passamaquoddy Bay by the west passage between Quoddy Head and Campobello Island. The whole of this coast is again indented with harbours, there being no less than six good ones between Gouldsboro' and Quoddy Head. This is a very great advantage to navigation, as the coasters need never stay out a night and can always put in when they please. The waters of Passamaquoddy Bay are again beautifully fine and Richards, who has travelled a good deal and has taste for drawing thinks them beyond any thing of the kind he has seen. The British and American lines run between Campobello and the main and between Deer and Moose Islands. The river boundary still remains in dispute, the British contending for the Schoodic and the Americans for what is called in the small map Passamaquoddy River. I was agreeably surprized to find important settlements in this remote part of the country, both on the British and American side. Campobello is a fine island but the proprietor resides on it and through mismanagement does not make much of it. Moose Island is covered with important settlements and very considerable trade is carried on by the Americans there in the produce of the country. It is though large divided into small lots and worth certainly from 30 to 50 dollars the acre. St. Andrews again on the British side is an important place but much injured by the war. I calculate there must be 2,000 inhabitants there and I was told that they have had captured eighteen topsail vessels since the war. This was an American refugee settlement and there are many respectable and wealthy people there.

The Schoodic up to Devil's Head is a large and fine river; it narrows there but is navigable for 200 tons up to the bend in No. 5, where there are falls which can never be made passable for vessels from sea.³ At these falls on the British side there is a considerable settlement called St. Stephens and several settlements on the American side. The former are more forward than the latter for the obvious reason that the government have given away the lands for nothing there and the other is all private property. There is a very good saw mill on the falls and three others on

³ The present town of Calais. At some point on this trip up the Schoodic, Noailles apparently was nearly drowned. See below, p. 805.

falls further up the river. A small tribe of Passamaquoddy Indians encamp near the first falls in the spring for the salmon fishing every year. We hired some of them and went further nine miles up the river in birch canoes to about the middle of our township No. 7, where the last settlement on this river is.⁴ The river is constantly interrupted by falls, where the Indians are obliged to carry their canoes on their backs and at each fall a mill is built on joint account by a number of the neighbours, the owners of soil on both sides having the right of mill seat. The lands of No. 6 and 7 and generally the borders of the Schoodic are very rich; they are low and the river, which is a large and rapid body of water, constantly overflows them and I have no doubt they will in time, like the meadows of Connecticut, become of very great value. They produce great quantities of natural grass and fine timber. There are two farms on No. 7, one of Stone, an honest industrious man with a large family, another of two young men who have just lost their father called Bailey,⁵ also apparently well disposed people. All these are concerned in the neighbouring mills. The situation of all this part of the country astonished me, as I did not expect to find any settlers and we are all convinced that it is a part of the country that will in time be very important, as it unites the two requisites of rich lands and good water communications.

Knox was appointed one of the arbitrators of the boundary line but refused as he might be supposed to be concerned in the decision. From what I have seen I am persuaded the Schoodic and the eastern branch of it, where it separates above No. 7 will be the line. I do not see that either decision can affect us materially, but I should wish it to be so decided, first because the contrary decision would bring a large additional mass of lands to market on the part of the state and secondly because a boundary is always valuable from the opportunities of smuggling, which is already in practice. The value of lands on the American side is much higher in estimation than on the New Brunswick, but both [are] on the advance and will continue so, as the good lands to be given away are nearly all disposed of. The inland water communications of the Schoodic from the lakes must make this river important. The Indians pass up the river in their canoes through the great lakes above Nos. 4, 5, 6, and down the Passadunky above Nos. 1 and 2 into the Penobscot in four days, which perfectly insulates that part of the country. I wished very much to try the

⁴ The present town of Baileyville.

⁵ I have not been able to identify Stone and Bailey. Presumably Bailey was the man for whom the town was named. The census taker failed to reach Baileyville when the census of 1790 was taken.

excursion, as it would give me a very good idea of the susceptibilities of the country, but we were too many and my companions did not like it. I may perhaps try it next year. A very valuable branch of occupation on this river is the salmon fishing. Vast quantities are caught for which you could get cash on the spot at 9 dollars the barrel. I saw the Indians in one night catch for the value of upwards of 20 dollars, which they afterwards spend at the stores of imported goods.

In fact the country wants nothing but hands to be made any thing of; an industrious labourer can generally earn two dollars a day or nine shillings sterling. The intrinsic resources of such a country must be great; we generally presume that population and means of subsistence find their level and that the first will flow where the last exists to the greatest degree and that must ultimately be inevitably the case in that country. I have however remarked that the great ease of obtaining a living is frequently prejudicial to a country and the natural indolence of man will not let him work two days for what he can earn in one. This is much the case in this part of the country and I saw many men who subsisted a week on three days labour; the cause however is a happy one and though the effect may be momentarily bad, it must necessarily be remedied by an increase of population. Again only a small part of the natural resources of the country are employed for the subsistence of the inhabitants and the superfluity of means prove in a manner prejudicial to it for the moment. The only occupations attended to with few exceptions are fishing and lumbering. They are found the most profitable and none less so being resorted to, agriculture is neglected, but this will also find the same remedy. It would surprize you to hear that where lands are so good and cheap upwards of half the Indian corn and wheat flour consumed in the country has for a long time past been imported and that so new a country can bear to pay for it. It has however from experience been found that though the nominal proffits of the fisherman and lumberer are greater than those of the farmer, yet that the latter lives better and enjoys more of the comforts of life. There are many instances of this in the country which have and continue to have considerable effect. On the British side near Oak Point in particular there are near thirty families settled who attend to nothing but their farms and are considered as the best livers in the country. Many of the families make from 4 to 500 weight of maple sugar, which can be done entirely by the women and children and sells at St. Andrews for three fourths of the value of West India sugar. The inhabitants on both sides of the boundary live in perfect harmony together and there is not the least visible appearance of different governments. The tides in this

part of the country rise to an enormous height, in some parts of the Bay of Fundy fifty to sixty feet and near thirty in the Schoodic.

We were detained by calms some days in these waters and afterwards sailed to Machias.⁶ The bay is fine and the navigation of the river good for small vessels. It is not accurately laid down on the map. The settlements are on the two branches called eastern and western, about three miles from the port. At each settlement there are saw mills for lumber, which constitutes with ship building the only trade of these parts. The largest village is on the Kawahskitchwook, as it is called on the map, where there may be near a hundred houses and many good ones; in the other settlement just under Machias Lake there are not much more than half that number but the whole country between and round about the bay is thickly inhabited.⁷ Here again agriculture has been much neglected and flour is still imported, but a change is taking place and there are some good farmers who attend to nothing but their lands. Some low lands on

⁶ While becalmed, Baring wrote a letter to his brother-in-law, Pierre César Labouchere, which is the only really informal one in BaP. In this letter, dated Machias, 12 August 1796, Baring reported that he was "on board ship almost totally becalmed for this last four or five days, which if you were much accustomed to the sea, you would know is a most tedious situation, and what with me renders it still more so is that we are so tormented to death with Musketoos which infest all uncleaned countries that I have not slept two hours for several nights past." He explains that they had left their ladies at General Knox's, "the accommodations in a new country being indifferent," which was putting it mildly. Passamaquoddy Bay Baring thought extraordinarily beautiful; "the only thing that prevents our enjoying our situation as much as we otherwise should is the immensity of Musketoos; they plague us beyond anything you could conceive from so insignificant an insect. The inhabitants tell us they are particularly plenty this year and I have the satisfaction to hear that strangers are the greatest sufferers and that I am soon likely to be inured to them."

Baring also sent an interesting request to Labouchere, to be transmitted to Henry Philip Hope, who, it was thought, might come to America in the fall: "If he passes through England . . . desire him to bring out a servant and a good groom that he can depend on; also three good horses and one or two light chairs for *me*, since I much regret I did not take them. They are not luxuries but indispensable, for you can not travel without them and every thing of the kind here is twice as dear and much worse, and good servants are not to be had. I am particularly fortunate in John, who is a real treasure. Two horses which I travel with cost me about 100 guineas; I could certainly get them in London for 50 and yet the purchase is thought a good one. I believe I can get my money back."

Despite his troubles with Musketoos, Baring was enjoying himself: "Setting aside the gratification I receive from this excursion on the score of bussines, it has been an agreeable thing on that of pleasure. Our ladies are every thing we could wish and put up with the inconveniences very well."

⁷ The "largest village" was the present Machias on the Machias River; the other settlement was near the present East Machias.

Machias River, which are not so fine as those I described on the Schoodic, are valued at 20 dollars the acre.

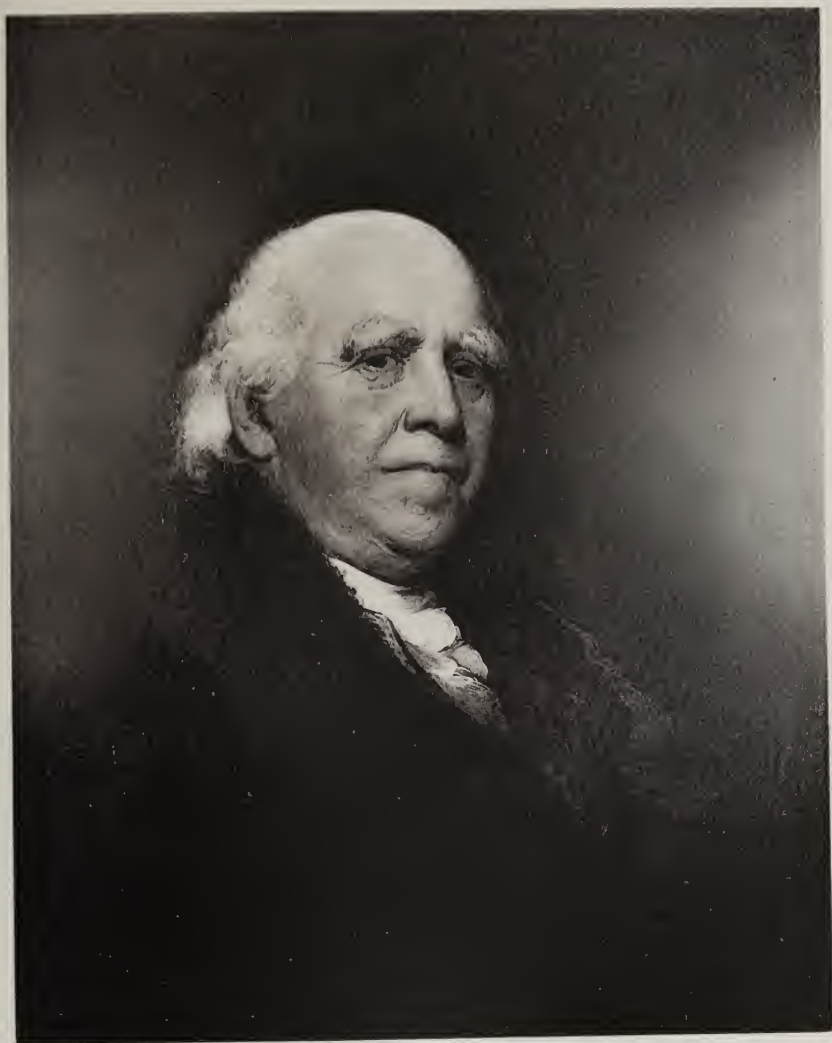
At Machias our party seperated; Knox and Richards went with the vessel round to Frenchman's Bay; Bingham, Noailles and myself remained a day longer at Machias and were hospitably entertained by Judge Jones and Mr. Bruce, two very respectable characters. The next morning we set out on horseback for Gouldsboro', which is 46 miles distance. The road for 17 miles is merely a path cut through the woods without any attention to the ground and terribly bad, so much so that one degree more would be impassable. At $8\frac{1}{2}$ miles distance from Machias you fall on a very pretty settlement in the middle of the forest on Chandler's River in the township No. 22, of which we own a small undivided part.⁸ The borders of the river from No. 23 to the sea are settled and there is a mill on the river. At the same distance from thence there is again another much more considerable settlement on Pleasant River on the borders of our No. 13 and from thence to the sea.⁹ The land of all these townships is good but especially No. 13 and the borders of Pleasant River, where there are very fine meadows. The Pleasant River settlement contains several very good houses, a neat inn lately built with two stories and a garret, several other buildings coming forward and very good saw and grist mills. The occupation here as every where else is chiefly lumbering but there are some good farms and a great deal of good summer wheat is grown. The settlement belongs principally to one family composed of a widow and several children who own a large undivided part of No. 6, which with a part of No. 13 has been incorporated into a town by petition to the inhabitants called Pleasant River town.¹ There is no objection to this interference with the old run lines provided we do not get into confusion, which we must take measure to prevent. I was more pleased with this spot than any I had seen. It presents more the appearance of cultivation and of old countries than any other and I should certainly prefer it as a residence. The people are agreeable and when we were there they were getting their church ready by subscription and had appointed their clergyman and built him a handsome mansion.

The bad roads end at Pleasant River; a few miles through Number 12 there is a good carriage road and the remainder is a good path to Gouldsboro'. We talked to the people at Pleasant River about their roads and in conjunction with those of Machias, they are this winter to burn [?] out

⁸ This was the purchase from John Lucas. See above, p. 62.

⁹ The present Columbia Falls.

¹ When actually incorporated that same year, the town was named Addison.



Judge Stephen Jones of Machias
First Citizen of Washington County
Portrait by Gilbert Stuart

and widen them. About four miles from Pleasant River and nearly in the center of No. 12 we found a settlement of about thirty Quaker families, who had all good farms near each other and had formed themselves into a society.² Settlements in new countries always commence on the waters and in Maine by lumbering and not by agriculture. This was the first exception I met with, for they were distant from any river and lived entirely from their farms. I attribute it to the Quaker character, being averse to the vagrant life of a lumberer, and as they are a moral quiet set of people I think them a vast acquisition to our country. The land hereabouts is strong and good, but in the corner of No. 12 between 11 and 5 there is a plain of two or three miles diameter very poor and barren.³ The soil is perfectly barren and covered with a short kind of heath and no wood. It has the appearance of having been burnt but the soil is so hard that it can never have been good. We thought it likely to contain some valuable mineral but I had rather it had been good production soil. There are some remarkable fine springs of water in it and the nature of the whole is singular and different from any thing I ever saw. When you get over the plain, which is a hill with a table top, you descend again on good lands. On our No. 11 there again are some farming settlements which continue untill you come to Naraguagus River, which is thickly settled from No. 11 down to the sea with mills and every possible convenience. This settlement is much larger than Pleasant River and we were hospitably received by General Campbell, who lives there, owns mills, and is a leading character in the country.⁴ We slept at Naraguagus after having been eleven hours on horseback. There are some farms round about this river but the labour of the inhabitants is again chiefly engrossed by lumbering.

The next morning we crossed No. 4, which is good land but not much settled excepting on the sea shore, which is incorporated into a town called Steuben town. As you approach No. 7, the settlements begin to thicken and continue uninterrupted to Gouldsboro', which we now entered from the land side, finding the soil good until we came again upon the rocky point. From General Cobb's we crossed the township to the inlet of water on the other side, which makes it a peninsula, just over the letter N of No. 3 on the map. Here we found again our friends that we left at Machias

² I have found no other mention of these Quaker families in any of the contemporary letters. There is no mention of them in *Centennial Historical Sketch of the Town of Columbia* (Machias, 1896).

³ The plain is in the southwest corner of Columbia, near the Cherryfield line.

⁴ Alexander Campbell. See *Bangor Historical Magazine*, VII. 164-166.

with our vessel at anchor. On this inlet of water lives the richest character to the east of Penobscot, a Colonel Jones, distant relative of Judge Jones of Machias.⁵ He owns the part of Gouldsboro' which does not belong to us and in fact the best part. He has long resided here, has a large farm, good house and three mills which go by water from a pond above him which he lets through by sluices. He has been making experiments of all kinds and is useful to the country. As such Cobb keeps friends with him and he received us very hospitably but we believe him to be a great rascal and do not trust him. The situation of his estate makes it not only remarkably beautiful and desirable but very valuable. He asks 30,000 dollars for it and for a person who would live there it is worth that to[o], but not to a speculator. Jones, who is an artful man, having resided long in Maine, has picked up several other of the most valuable spots and I believe has been cheating his neighbours and especially the former proprietors of Gouldsboro', but for that there is no remedy and we can only take care of ourselves. He owns several vessels at sea, which he builds himself at his wharf; while we were there one of his ships returned from Europe on freight for her first voyage, which had entirely paid her cost.

Frenchmans Bay, tho' it appears open on the map is a very good harbour and could contain the largest navy in safety, particularly on the Gouldsboro' side within the islands. We sailed from Jones's to Mount Desart Narrows between the island and the township of Trenton and the wind being adverse tacked the whole day about in different parts of the bay. I will refer you to Richards for the beauties of all this part of the country, as that part of the description is not the object of my letter. I can only say that it is the finest scenery I have witnessed in this country and when cultivation is more general, it must be very much ornamented. We did not land on any part of Sullivan township but saw the settlements, which are numerous and in good order. The same is the case with Mount Desart. This island, which is a very large one, contains in the middle very high mountains, higher than any part of the American coast. The tops are uncultivable but at the foot of them, they gradually slope towards the water with fine lands and are very thickly settled, as much so in fact as any part of the country and I think the island will in time become very valuable. On the point of land in the township of Trenton projecting most towards Mount Desart, excepting the point of Union River Bay, is situated Van Berckel's mansion on the 8,000 acres he has there which do not regard us. The situation is fine but the house is a loghouse and though larger than any ever seen is an ugly, dreary thing and there are no im-

⁵ Colonel Nathan Jones. See *Historical Researches of Gouldsborough, Maine*, 12-16.

provements on the farm. The whole has quite the appearance of a French whim, for with half the money expended, the place might have been made comfortable. At present they have abandoned it altogether and it is in ruins. The branch of the sea separating Mount Desert from the continent is dry at low water and the island could with ease be joined by a bridge. At high water a vessel drawing eight feet can pass and it could very well be made passable for a larger burthen; but these kind of improvements can only take place at a very distant period.⁶

On passing the Narrows we came into Bluehill Bay, which again is beautifully interspersed with islands. We sailed up Union River to where it becomes narrow on the map and from thence we went about nine miles up the river in our longboat. Both sides of this river are very well settled up to the middle of No. 8 and the country on all sides round it. Jones has property here; he owns the mills which a son of his superintends.⁷ Vessels drawing about ten feet can come up to the middle of No. 8 but above that it is only navigable for boats. The settlements here are thriving and will, I think, be important. The lands are very good and are represented as very rich indeed further up the river, where there are natural meadows from which the farmers fetch their hay every year. All the lands between Union River and Penobscot are well settled and a great distance up the rivers. On the part of the township No. 9 projecting into the bay is situated the town of Castine or Penobscot, which is the largest town in any part of the country, has a good harbour, and will probably be the capital on Penobscot River. Opposite to it on the otherside the river, in Belfast Bay, a small island to which no name is given on the map called Brigadiers Island forms also a good harbour. It belongs to Knox and he thinks it will be a competitor with Castine, but the latter has got the start and where the natural advantages are equal, monied capital will turn the scale. Certain it is that some very important place will form itself on the Penobscot, probably one at Castine and another at the head of the tide. Every landholder can give you many reasons why it must be on his property, but I did not see the country sufficiently to form any opinion myself. Charles Vaughan gave £900 New England currency for a hundred acres on the western banks of the river above the Waldo Patent under an idea of fixing the seat of trade there. The Penobscot River in point of easy navigation and extensive inland communication is surpassed by none in

⁶ This may have been the place where the future Lord Ashburton ran what Cobb called a "mud race," presumably an attempt to get ashore at low tide. See below, p. 809.

⁷ This was Theodore Jones, of what was later to become Ellsworth.

this country but the Hudson, and it must for some time be a very attractive object to new settlers.

From Union River we sailed to the small island coloured on the map near Mount Desart called Bartlet's Island. This island, which contains only 1,400 acres, is a very promising property; the soil is good and there is a quantity of timber on it which from the easy approach to it is valuable. The only inhabitant is Bartlett⁸ and his two sons; he owns 200 acres in a settlers right and requested us to let his sons have a farm, which we shall do. The old man's farm is in good order and we got a supply of good butter, cream, milk, vegetables and mutton from him, which indeed every part of the country afforded us daily with much less difficulty than any of the interior parts of this or the southern states. Bartlet protects the island for us and in securing to himself the advantage of game, which is very abundant here, he is at variance with the inhabitants of the neighbouring islands and when we were there at open war. The effects of a recluse and unsocial life was evident in these people on the islands; their minds were more savage and their ideas different from those of their neighbours on the continent. All the islands are thought worth 3 or 4 dollars the acre and I believe would fetch that if really sold; but they are precious appendages to our property and I wish we owned more of them. Deer, Fox, and Burncoat Islands are almost entirely covered with farms and I should have mentioned that part of Mount Desart is incorporated into a town by the name of Eden, which the inhabitants gave it in consequence of its fertility. Our party being all in a hurry to get home, we could not effect our project of going up the Penobscot, which I very much wished, and hope to effect next year with Mr. H. P. Hope.⁹ From Bartlet's Island we returned with our packet the same track we came and landed at Clam Cove, six miles from General Knox's after being out from thence twenty two days. We staid a few days at the General's and returned again to Portland in an extraordinary passage of seven hours. We took our horses again at Portland and returned to Philadelphia, where we arived the 22nd September after a very pleasant and gratifying excursion.

In turning back to the foregoing sheets, I fear I shall have tired your patience with an unnecessary detail of our excursion. It appeared to me the easiest manner to communicate to you local and partial information of the different parts of the country. I will now trouble you with some general remarks on the subject of our lands as the result of the above par-

⁸ Christopher Bartlett. See G. E. Street, *Mount Desart*, 170.

⁹ For Henry Philip Hope, see below, p. 847, note 8.

ticular and partial observations. Bingham's situation and the nature of the business itself obliged us to a singular mode of proceeding in this operation—that of making our purchase first and looking at what we had bought afterwards and what is more singular is that a man in the country itself should have bought and held the property three years without ever seeing it. It is a mode I should be very cautious of adopting again, for I perceive clearly that printed informations, though they may be correctly true, by telling only part of the truth, and hiding what may be prejudicial, must always be deceptive and give an inadequate idea of the object. We went in this instance entirely upon public report and opinions and it is with great pleasure I inform you that though my ideas of the thing were in many instances erroneous, yet considering all circumstances my expectations have been very much exceeded and my opinions of the speculation have never in any instance been shaken. You will be able to draw a great deal of information from Richards, whose opinion I think highly of and believe formed with great judgement and impartiality. You will only recollect that he was not in the excursion by land which was more usefull than all the rest together and produced much flattering evidence.

You will observe by the map that we only visited the settled parts and did not go much into the heart of the country. Our company was not disposed for any thing more arduous and I was obliged to satisfy myself with information from the inhabitants of what we could not visit personally. The settlements are in fact the interesting object, as in the wild lands it is merely the variation of soil that is worth noticing. The state of the country with respect to settlements principally exceeded my expectations, both as to numbers, and character and disposition of the people. I thought we should have had almost every thing to create instead of which you will have remarked that we are surrounded by population that is daily increasing in addition to the migrations from the old states. From No. 7 on the Schoodic all round the Atlantic coast and up to the same height on the Penobscot, there is a ring of settlements which of itself must naturally force itself upon the interior of the country, which with our improvements and exertions will be hastened. It is impossible for a country to be more ripe nor more conveniently situated for increase of population and we perceived the natural effects every where in the constant clearing new farms and burning the woods. We were in the country at the time this takes place and could constantly see the smoke rising out of the woods in eight or ten different places at a time. The easy water communications of the Passadunky River and of the Lakes will also en-

able us to bring forward the settlements in that quarter. The New England people who emigrate in great numbers to the southward every year begin to turn their ideas more and more to Maine and the country becomes better known. It would not surprize me if the tide of population should turn strongly to the north as the old prejudices against the country are removing. A great inducement to the emigrators is the easy conveyance of their property and communications with the country they leave, which they find in none of the back countries so completely as in Maine, for the average passage from Gouldsboro' to Boston is not above three days and the expence when a packet is established would be a mere trifle.

But in addition to the emigrations we can attract, the natural increase of population must insure a certain though much slower settlement. The country is remarkably healthy and the inhabitants more robust and handsome than in any part of the continent. There are few houses that are not full of children. A Quaker we visited on No. 12 had seventeen and I found on enquiry that the thirty families settled there averaged upwards of eight children each. A large family being rather an assistance than an embarrassment, people all marry and generally early.¹ This is more or less the case through all parts of this continent and makes the increase of population much more rapid than in Europe. The satisfaction that was every where expressed with their situation by the inhabitants was very general. I enquired minutely and heard no complaints against the climate, soil, etc., which is almost always the case in new countries; but every body seemed pleased, which was a great effect on visitors. The principal settlements are on the rivers, where they always commence, and from thence they extend backwards. From this circumstance and the easy communications along the coast, the roads are neglected and bad; this is an inconvenience to be attended to. I described the path from Gouldsboro' to Machias and from thence it continues in the same state to Passamaquoddy Bay opposite St. Andrews in No. 4. This is the post road but so bad that you can not find it without a guide in the woods. What is understood by making a road in a new country is merely cutting down and removing the large trees, leaving the stumps and small wood. The breadth varies from three to four and twenty feet; it is not easy to ascertain in a thick wood the best direction for a road and the surveyors accustomed to this bussiness often make mistakes. Our road from Goulds-

¹ In his letter to his father dated 11 December 1795 in BaP, Baring had also made this point. He spoke of all the New England people marrying young, and of there being no elderly bachelors.

boro' is begun and carried a few miles, but the price of labour was so high that Cobb gave it up and will make a contract for it in the course of the winter.

Not only the number of settlers round our lands surprized me agreeably but I was equally pleased with their disposition and character, as having less of the wild and savage about it than from the remote situation of the country we had reason to expect. At all the chief points of settlement there are steady and respectable characters which give the tone to the others and so far from any irreligion prevailing, we found the country infested with a pack of fanatical itinerant Methodist preachers that had disturbed the community and were rather obnoxious in the other extreme. I found private property very generally understood and respected and no disposition to invade, as was the case in Knox's patent.

I am not sure that I ever mentioned to you the reserve made by the State of Massachusetts for settlers on the lands at the time of sale; it obliges us to give every settler previous to the year 1784 a deed for one hundred acres adjoining and including his improvements for five dollars and the same to every settler before the year 1791 for twenty dollars. The greatest number of our settlers were within one of those two dates and we found them all ready to come forward and settle with us. Others that had settled without any protection preferred petitions that they might be leniently treated and in no one instance was there the least threat of resistance or opposition. The sum we are to receive is nothing, for it will cost us more to run out the lines of their farms, and I consider them as so much given away, but the addition of value this population gives us is so much more than a compensation that I regret there are no more and should have no objection to half the tract being occupied in the same manner. In arranging with these people we shall be subject to impositions in point of dates and boundaries, but I believe we must be indulgent and not stick to the letter of the law. One difficult question has already arisen, whether a settler on a river with a millseat has a right to that millseat in virtue of the law or whether he has merely a right to the farm. I have no doubt that the latter is the just interpretation of the law, but as it bears a doubt we think it will be good policy to compromise, particularly as the settlers have in many instances built mills and the difference to us is not material and particularly not worth standing at variance about with people on whose good will we must in a great measure depend. My idea of policy with respect to the people is that we must make ourselves liked, never claim any thing which is not only legally but equitably right, and a claim once being made, that it must be firmly upheld, in short that the method of our

agents must be *suaviter in modo fortitur in re* [sic]. We were not only called on by all the settlers to come to arrangements but had through the whole of our excursion constant applications for the sale of new lands, all which we referred to Cobb to be taken up upon certain principles when he is ready to receive proposals. I see clearly that there will be no want of applicants and that a very little encouragement will attract as many as we wish.

I mentioned in relating our excursion the soil of the particular tracts we passed through. On this subject my enquiries were very particular and the result generally speaking very satisfactory. In a tract of land fifty miles square there must of course be a vast variety of soil and notwithstanding all reports were favorable it would be absurd to suppose that there were not in the interior of the country spots similar to the one I mentioned in No. 12 or that there were not bogs, rocks, and sand as well as fine loam. The old states of New England are very poor within ten or twenty miles of the sea. New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Connecticut and part of New York are extremely rocky, so much so that a foreigner would think them uncultivable. The southern states on the contrary are one bed of barren sand for fifty miles back. Maine is more like the New England shore, the coasts being rocky but not near so much as, excepting near Gouldsborough, and the soil when you come to it is good. I can safely assert and I am sure Richards will confirm it as his opinion that the lands near the sea in Maine are superior for cultivation to any part of the coast on the continent. It appears as if nature had dispensated different advantages to different parts of the country; that part enjoying advantages of situation is defective in soil and made to defend the rich lands of the interior from the approach of the ocean. You will observe we have not generally the sea shore townships, which though of inferior soil are first settled. It becomes better as you get into the country and from all the reports I have collected I believe the tract to contain as much cultivable and good land as any tract of the same extent on the continent (excepting the flats of the Genisee and of the Ohio, which you know are very defective in situation) and considerably more than any enjoying the benefits of a similar situation. The growth of the sea shore lands is chiefly spruce and pine of all kinds but in the second townships the hard woods commence and are principally the oak, hemlock, maple, larch, ash, elm etc. Soils are generally distinguished by their growth in this country, but the distinction is frequently deceptive and the same tree indicates different soils in different parts. Our pine lands in Maine are often fine, but to the southward very seldom; the oak on the contrary which is a good sign is fre-

quently seen in poor lands but of small size. All our rivers are bordered with rich meadows and the account given by the Indians and others that have visited our back lands round the lakes lead us to believe them to be very rich in soil. No. 16 in the East Division round Lake Meddybump² is also called very fine and we have had application by a company for lands there. No. 17 Middle Division³ is settling by some people Cobb brought with him from Taunton in Massachusetts and he writes that they are very much pleased with the land. New England in general is full of fresh water lakes, the borders of which are generally high and they do not create swamps as stagnant ponds do in Europe. The country is in that respect singular. I do not mean that there are no swamps but that the tract generally speaking, though well watered, is not subject to them to any extent. The reduction you talk of for water and for roads would never have occurred to persons here, though it does not surprize me that it should to you. The fact is that the lands must be resold either in large tracts in which case the purchaser takes surface in the same manner you do, or in retailed farms when the value must be so very much beyond your purchase price that the reduction would never be an object; for you will please to keep in view that our present sales are not for the purpose of realizing but to attract settlers and enhance the value of the remainder and probably the last hundred thousand acres if well conducted will be worth more than the whole entire tract is now. The land was measured by the surveyors of the state, who run strait lines and when it has been possible, of six miles so that the townships are mostly a square of six miles or thirty six square miles. Water has been paid no attention to and the inequalities of surface are in your favour. There are no settlers who would not pay double for a farm on some waters and even what we should suppose to be swamps are generally of great service to them.

You will have remarked from the details of our excursion that the inhabitants of Maine are more occupied at present with lumbering and fishing than with agriculture. This, as I mentioned, is the effect of the great resources of the country and must be gradually removed by increase of population. There is not a river on which a mill for sawing boards is not erected and the southern states, as well as the West Indies, are supplied entirely from Maine, the old countries being exhausted. Maine to the west of Kennebeck and almost to the Penobscot is itself nearly cleared of all the fine lumber and the people go as far as forty or fifty miles back for it. This is the occupation of the winter; it is drawn over the snow and sent

² The present town of Alexander.

³ The present town of Deblois.

down the rivers in the spring to the mills, when the lumberer and miller gets his share. There is scarcely a settler in the country who has not some direct or indirect concern in this business, it being so much more lucrative than any other pursuits. It is in consequence alluring to the individuals but equally fatal to the growth of the country, for many reasons which reduce themselves to two general ones: first, it affects the character and disposition of the people, for the nature of the business necessarily encourages indolence; they have no constant occupation, no tie to the country or object in view to engross their care or solicitude as a farmer has, no fixed homes and consequently lead a vagrant life which is attended by dissipation; secondly, the labour of the people is not productive to the country; for every dollar the farmer draws from the land he adds an equal value to it by improvements and the country itself grows with the prosperity of the inhabitants. But the lumberer adds no value by his labour; he earns by cutting the wood wherewithal to consume, not the produce of the country itself, but the imported produce of others and if millions of these people had been on this tract and left it, they would leave no vestige of benefit to the proprietors. If on the contrary the farming interest was strong enough to supply the lumberman with his food, the country would reap some advantage from his labour, for the whole produce of it would not go abroad and this additional source of prosperity would benefit us by attracting an additional population. The migrations from the New England states have a great repugnance to this mode of living and I am happy to say the tide is turning; there are in many parts farmers who attend merely to their farms and the number is increasing in proportion as people became convinced of the real superiority of that occupation to procure them the comforts of life, though the other, on a shortsighted calculation, may be more plausible. We have frequently considered of the means of discouraging lumbering and encouraging farming but I believe the best policy will be to leave the people to themselves and to let nothing be forced. As, however, all the lumber between Penobscot and Schoodic has been stolen off our lands, we intend in future to take our share, as proprietors, of boards at the mills and Cobb writes that he has made a successful commencement in this operation during the winter. They have always considered this a fair depredation and our new regulation has succeeded better than I expected. We have also in contemplation to buy up some of the mills round us and rent them and shall most probably do it, by which means we shall get the business into our own hands and can manage it at pleasure. For if properly carried on, the circumstance of a settler being able to dispose of the wood he clears from his

lands is a very great advantage, it being merely the manner and the excess that is prejudicial.

In enumerating the advantages and resources of the country I should in its present state rank lumber at the head; it is the article that keeps the shipping and trade of the country in activity, but at the same time employs the labour of the country in the least productive manner. There is no small port in Maine that does not own some shipping; the whole coasts swarm with coasters who are employed in nothing but carrying lumber and firewood to Boston and the ports as far down as Connecticut River. Penobscot River owns upwards of two hundred sail and the wind having changed while we were in the bay, we saw one hundred sail get under weigh for the southward at once. Knox's river owns 1,400 ton of shipping and 900 were on the stocks when we were there. It is a singular circumstance that a country so little cultivated should in every other respect be so forward. Wiscasset, a port on Kennebec, owns more shipping than all the State of New Hampshire together and the whole District more than one half of that of Massachusetts. I am collecting some exact calculations on this head. Every person in Maine understands shipbuilding and the vessels are constructed on joint account by a few neighbours with a very trifling expence, all the materials being on the spot. We saw an instance of a vessel being put to sea with the advance of only three hundred dollars which cleared two thousand the first trip to Europe. It is not to be wondered at that under these circumstances people will not trudge after the plough. We saw a farmer in Knox's patent who owned two good farms, two ships at sea and was blacksmith and butcher for the neighbourhood. At all these occupations he worked alternately but the want of a division of labour must make each imperfectly followed.

This state of things can only find their remedy in an increased population and when that happens will be of vast service to the farmers, for it creates a circulation of money and resources and I found less difficulty in getting dollars in Passamaquoddy Bay for a Boston or New York bank note than you would in the heart of Virginia. The consequence will be that the settlers will hereafter be able to pay you in cash and you will not be obliged to take a calf or a bushel of corn as is the case in Genisee. An inhabitant of Frenchmans Bay informed me that a few years back there was so little money in this country that dollars were shewn about among the farmers as curiosities and now there is an abundance every where and all bussiness is done for cash or boards. The anecdote proves much, though I believe the contrast magnified. The article of firewood is important, the old states being much exhausted. Wood sells in Boston cur-

rently at 5 or 6 dollars the cord and has in winters been as high as 7 or 8. In Maine you can ship it at one and the owners of coasting vessels make large profits by this business. Wood for fires near the large towns is dearer than it was in France and Germany and from a total want of any system of preservation of forests, the country is daily exhausting. After wood and shipbuilding the fisheries will be a vast resource to Maine, no part of the continent being better calculated for it from the easy access to its harbours and proximity to the Banks. At this moment it is carried on by means of capital from Marblehead and other ports in Massachusetts Bay and wants nothing but capital in the country to secure a decided superiority over them.

But as proprietors of lands we must look to the last and most important object of resource, I mean agriculture. The former may insure the country's future growth and importance but one man occupied with the latter is more valuable to us than fifty others. The District has the same advantages as Massachusetts as a grazing country and is in addition a good wheat and corn country. The New England states produce no wheat; the people say the soil is not suited to it, but I rather believe it proceeds from ignorance in theoretical agriculture, which pervades every part of the union. Certain it is that all the states to the north of New York import their wheat flour, though they export large quantities of Indian corn and salted meats. In Maine the summer and winter wheats have been tried with great success, but only for a few years past and chiefly to the east of Penobscot. At Chandlers, Pleasant, Naraguagus and Machias rivers we saw some very fine fields of standing wheat and near Gouldsboro' and in Frenchmans Bay it was growing quite down to the sea side, which is very uncommon. I was informed the crops averaged from 20 to 35 bushels per acre, which is very high and perhaps rather exaggerated. I believe the average of England is not above 15 bushels and you must remember that they have in Maine no manure to prepare their lands and only rake in their seeds among the stumps without ploughing. Barley and oats do well and particularly the latter is better than in any parts of the southern states. We also saw some good fields of flax and plenty of Indian corn. I look upon the discovery of wheat succeeding so well a vast advantage to Maine, for as they can navigate much cheaper than the southern people they will monopolize the supply of the old New England states.

The most rooted prejudice existing against the District of Maine and indeed the only one that has any shadow of pretext is the subject of climate, which upon strict enquiry I find to be a complaint merely of those

who were never in the country. None of the settlers stated it as an objection and on the contrary many who emigrated from Massachusetts and Connecticut made no distinction in this respect. I believe the winters may be rather longer, but not so as to prevent the farmer getting the same succession of crops from his lands as you can in Pennsylvania, though the latter may be more forward and the Virginia farmer still more. The winters are more steady as the snow generally lays upon the ground two months without interruption, which is the most busy time for those concerned in lumbering and a time of relaxation and amusement for the farmer. The cold is no more intense than it is here and less so than up the North River. I took the following notes from a meteorological observation taken on St. Georges River last winter in a fair exposure by Fahrenheit's thermometer.⁴

November

Mean height 8 o'clock A.M.	39	4 o'clock P.M.	45
Greatest do.	58		59
Lowest do.	27		35

December

Mean height	36		44
Greatest do.	54		62
Lowest do.	24		35

January

Mean height	25	32	N.B. Mercury before sun rise twice below 0.
Greatest do.	43	49	
Lowest do.	2	2	

February

Mean height	21		34
Greatest do.	47		51
Lowest do.	3		8

March

Mean height	29		38
Greatest do.	47		49
Lowest do.	11		17

April

Mean height	41		52
Greatest do.	49		67
Lowest do.	20		37

May

Mean height	49		53
Greatest do.	60		68
Lowest do.	40		40

The freezing point is at 32 and we have had here for the last week several times mercury 3 below naught or 35 below the freezing point. As a winter climate for a residence I should prefer Maine to Philadelphia in

⁴ Compare these readings with those reported by William Morris. See above, p. 202.

consequence of the steadiness of the weather and as before remarked the objection as it respects the interruption of labour and of vegetation is not grounded. The summer climate I can speak knowingly of and it is certainly the finest I ever witnessed, the thermometer varying in the middle of the day between 70 and 80, that is on the coast, where there are constant sea breezes; further back in the country the heat is stronger. Indian corn thrives well, which is a proof that the average heat is sufficient for all the produce of these latitudes. The reason why the same latitudes in America are so much colder than those in Europe is still a subject of doubt and speculation but it is certain that the climate is tempered by settlement, which enables the sun to come at the earth instead of being warded off by the leaves of the forest, which do not retain or absorb it. In Maine as every where this effect of clearing land is sensibly felt. We have therefore to look to an amelioration and I have no hesitation in believing that some years hence, when probably our concern in the country is at an end, the climate will be thought the finest in America. You will recollect that Penobscot is only in latitude 44:23—only 2 degrees north of Boston though 246 miles distant, the course being more easterly than northerly. It is to the southward of Halifax and Quebec and near 8 degrees south of London. The objection of climate being weighty I have paid great attention to it and I really believe it of little real consequence, but as it is a prejudice it becomes of real consequence to be removed and attended to. When a country is to be raised to importance by settlement, imaginary evils are nearly as bad as real, and imaginary advantages are of the same real benefit to you in the other scale. The report of the inhabitants of Maine themselves will stand the test of enquiry and as the country becomes better known I am sure it will be better appreciated.

It is expected that the District of Maine will be formed into a separate state. Two years past a petition was presented to the state of Massachusetts to desire they would take the general sense of the people on this question in Maine, which was complied with and three fourths were averse to this separation. It is now to be tried a second time and expected to succeed, the growing importance of the country having rendered it necessary to have their state government nearer them. In the judiciary it becomes most necessary for on the Kennebeck settlements there are numbers of disputed titles in the decision of which in the present state of things little progress is made. There are more than twice the number of inhabitants requisite to form a state, the last census having estimated them at 100/M, which must since have nearly doubled, and there can be no doubt of their admission into the union if the people desire it. The refusal of

their independence and satisfaction with the dominion of Massachusetts proves in my opinion great moderation and wisdom, as self-government is an enticing thing and a people is more apt to over than underrate their readiness for it. The constitution will be modelled after that of Massachusetts and I have no doubt that our friend Knox will be made governor. The Federal party or political supporters of government in this country and consequently all the leading characters in New England wish for the separation to strengthen their party in Congress and balance the addition of the last new made states of Kentucky and Tennessee, which are under Virginia influence. I think the event a desirable one for us, as it will raise the importance of the country and attract more the notice of its neighbours. The consequences to be apprehended would be a want of sufficient character in the country and that the state legislature might direct their laws to the prejudice of non resident proprietors of land who are now under the protection of Massachusetts, but I confess I do not think these apprehensions weighty, for I believe the mass of the people to be well disposed and in addition the State of Massachusetts will make some regulations in this respect and scrutinize their constitution previous to their emancipation. Mr. King, who headed the Federal party in the Senate, can give you any information on this subject.⁵ He is a native of Maine, though I believe he left it young.

I informed you of Richards having given up his idea of settling on our lands by a letter of introduction I gave him for Mr. H. Hope. I regret very much the loss of him, for I think he would have proved an active agent if he could have brought himself to like the thing. Without that, abilities and activity are nothing. An enthusiast like Williamson or Knox who always think their property worth twice as much as any body else are the most usefull men, for you can never convey your extravagant ideas to others so well as when you are really the dupe of them yourself. As I mentioned in my letter I do not think any person accustomed to gay life, however his situation may be broken down, could bring himself to enter with spirit into the business, though perhaps he might promise it in Europe. Perhaps understanding the character that is wanted you may hear of a likely one and in the meantime I am also looking out and we need neither of us decide hastily. I did not offer Richards at first as much as I really intended giving him and I would advise you, whomever you may take, to make small promises so that we may afterwards enhance the compensation in proportion as from experience we may expect benefit from his services which will enable us to attach him additionally by

⁵ Rufus King, at this time the United States minister to Great Britain.

generosity to us. You will keep in view that as we must with the best regulations always be at the mercy of our agent, moral character is the primary requisite and we shall always be ready to give a handsome compensation provided we are sure that what we give is the extent of his proffits and that he does not prey upon us by underhand artifices. We must never allow an agent to do bussiness on his own account but give him ample latitude on ours with a proper contract. The Scotch generally possess great industry and activity but they are artfull and their consciences often stretch to the shape of their interest. I believe this is the case with Williamson, who is speculating in the Genisee and has been very busy on his own accounts so as to have made a large purchase. It is true that Pulteney's speculation was left without controul to one agent and proves the policy of an American concern. Cobb is a good man and of great service to us from his character being so generally known and respected, but he grows old and we want some younger and more enterprizing man to second him, for in addition to the necessity of the European concern being represented there will arise a complicity of arrangement shortly that can not all be put on paper and will require two persons for security in case of death.

In the course of our excursion with Cobb and Knox we gave our opinions and local directions in the several parts of the country requiring it and Bingham has agreed to resume, in a general letter, the chief points of arrangements which, as he has been delaying it by constant occupations since the meeting of the Senate, I shall draw up myself and send you a copy. Notwithstanding the high price of labour I would have the roads continued and some measures taken to make the public one better, either by remonstrances to government or private support. The importance of roads is immense and can not be too much attended to. The expence would immediately be found in the additional value of the neighbouring land and the appearance of our exertions in the country would increase our popularity. The next chief object I want compleated is the exact survey of all the settled parts, that we may exactly understand our own and be subject to no more impositions. Without this we shall be always in the dark. When that is compleated we must go round and settle with every person on the land that they may have their titles and we can then, when farms are laid out on paper, fix the principles and make them known on which future sales may be made. We must also attend to the puff direct and indirect and put a few paragraphs in the New England papers so as to make the country more talked of. We shall establish our packet from Gouldsboro', form stores either by encouraging those who will do

it on their account or do it on ours, and buy up several of the mills and appoint our agents to attend that we get our share of the lumber cut on our lands. We do not want to benefit by the detail of trade and stores; on the contrary our object is to make it profitable to others so that our settlers may be supplied cheap, looking for our profit merely to the enhanced value this is to give our lands. Surveyors are very difficult to be had on tolerable terms. We must have one by the year and perhaps two at first and as soon as possible a more correct general map shall be formed. The small one is upon the whole very good and there are few lands that have the advantage of such a map. As to any additional purchases, the sea shore townships Nos. 4, 5, 6 belong to a rascal who is in prison here⁶ and he has mortgaged them to several different people; the best situations are besides all settled but if the remainder should be for sale in any secure shape we shall attend to them. The townships that do not belong to us in Passamaquoddy Bay are in the possession of people who are exerting themselves to settle them, which answers our purpose, for we do not want to monopolize land but merely that it should not be dormant and that every part of the country should move with different exertions. You could get none of these townships under a dollar the acre. The townships up Penobscot are in the same case; the bargain with the Indians is completed and when the state sells we shall attend to them closely. The demands of the holders of the vacant lands in Trenton and on Union River are much too high for the speculator and as the settlements are carrying on briskly, we don't want them. A dollar the acre is asked for the other half of Mount Desert; it belongs to Lane Son and Frazer of London; not above one half is cultivable and as we own the part nearest the shore, it is of no importance to us to have the other, particularly as one half of the good lands is already taken up.

I feel pretty much as you do on the subject of Van Berckel's claim and although I feel no apprehension of the ultimate result of a lawsuit, yet I confess I should be disposed to give more than the risk is worth to get rid of one. I have been trying to bring about some arrangement through the means of Cazenove but am obliged to be very cautious and let him come forward, that we may not compromit ourselves, for he is an artful fellow and neglects no opportunity to exercise his malice. I keep on good terms with him and with patience something may perhaps be done when Van Berckel loses the idea of our wanting to clear the difficulty. Our legal ground I think very safe, for the time of payment is as much a part of the contract as the sum to be paid and the deed was lodged in escrow for

⁶ Presumably Dr. Thomas Ruston. See above, p. 546, note 7.

the punctual performance of every part of the contract. In this country particularly, where money is so scarce, the difference in price between ready money and credit is more than half the capital. In England, where that great difference does not exist, some relief might perhaps be found in chancery, tho' I should hardly think it would in this instance, for chancery might, I believe, protest the forfeiture of a title but hardly vest one where it did not before exist. If the lawsuit could immediately be brought forward I would not give a hundred dollars to get free of the risk, but as it may be a tedious and troublesome threat to hang over us, I shall lose no opportunity to compromise reasonably, to which I feel much more inclination than our partner here, who unfortunately lets these little vexations take hold of his temper so as to disable him from acting prudently. Van Berckel has filed a bill against us at Portland,⁷ which on account of informality has been set aside; we must await his further steps and in the mean time you will please to keep in view that we run no risk of our capital, as the price Van B gives if he gains the suit is higher than ours, so that we shall even make a proffit by the loss, but the lands are more valuable to us and we must keep them. In how far it will be prudent to leave these townships untouched for the present I have not decided on, as I am always in hopes of removing the difficulty. The existence of it might make settlers who could not investigate the merits of the case shy of their titles, though if we should be condemned we should undoubtedly always recover the value of our improvements. The second payment of last May elapsed again so that two were left unsatisfied, but he has since made a formal tender of both instalments which, of course, were refused. His friends allow that he has no pretensions at law but expect their relief from a court of equity, which is a very limited and ill understood court in this country. My great reliance however still remains that our adversary is poor and that we shall ultimately get rid of him for a few hundred pounds. Mr. Gore is a good lawyer and can give you any information you may wish on the subject.⁸

I have now to communicate to you a probable alteration that may take place of importance in our original bargain. I believe I mentioned to you the situation of Bingham with the back tract, the exact extent of which was uncertain. You will recollect that he treated with the committee appointed by the state for the sale of eastern lands for a track back of his and extending to the highlands supposed to be about one million acres

⁷ For this suit, see above, p. 171.

⁸ Christopher Gore was by this time in England as one of the United States representatives on the claims commission set up by Jay's Treaty.

more or less and the payments by annual instalments were stipulated accordingly. But on survey the tract appears to contain three million acres, contrary to every previous expectation. Bingham consequently petitioned that the bargain might be confined to the quantity the purchaser and sellers had in view, or thereabouts. The committee reported in his favor and it passed the Senate, but it is stopped in the lower house by the objections of some new members who do not understand the case and require time for consideration. I believe there can be no doubt that it will pass and nothing can prevent it but the jealousy the people of Boston have of those who got the start of them in the land purchases in Maine. If Bingham's petition should not be carried, he must either take the whole three millions or none, upon which he is not decided. The price is 21 cents. In the mean time, if no arrangement is made before next spring, which is a year from my bargain being made, we shall be free to act as we please in consequence of the article in our agreement which I inserted foreseeing the possibility of our disappointment. I am not certain how I shall act under this circumstance, but shall see what can be made of Bingham and most certainly invest in some shape or other to the extent of your permission, availing in deciding on the mode, of my additional information and experience. As a tract to work upon by settlement one million acres is perfectly sufficient, but I still think the remainder a cheap and promising speculation and may perhaps conclude for it, tho' possibly I may be able to avail of B's situation to mend the bargain. In buying an additional tract my idea would be to sell it again to speculators and not settle it, which, in the present rage for American lands, I consider as no improbable event. B has offered the option of the Kennebeck tract in lieu of the upper million if we should not get it. I have heard reports of this tract very favorable and as it is near settlement it will in time be valuable. The report of Morris⁹ I believe to be incorrect; he was never over it and only on one part in the middle of winter. I think this tract likely to succeed to sell to speculators in Europe from its being compact and well watered, but the river Kennebeck is bad for navigation, though it is better settled than any part of Maine. You will find on recurring to the original bargain that B is bound, although we are not, for the upper million and when the time comes round I shall make up my mind according to the offers that are made.

I have continued to keep open and undecided the plan of association, that I might have time to receive your opinions and for my own to ripen;

⁹ The report of William Morris. See above, pp. 188-205.

in the mean time I have taken for our security a provisional deed to Thomas Willing Esquire,¹ who has executed a declaration of trust, so that the delay can be of no prejudice and that we might have time to give a point of such importance due consideration. I am now occupied in putting the whole in the order it is finally to remain in. It will be done in a few days previous to my departure for the southward and as I shall immediately send you copies of every thing, I shall not at present say much on the subject. Mr. H. Hope's name can not be availed of, as I expected.² In this state it might but in Massachusetts it has been established as a precedent that all American citizenship of natives of the country dates from their independence, for on their separation from England every person was supposed to have the option of sticking to the colony or the mother country, and those who absented themselves from the former were supposed to adhere to the latter and on their return are subjected to the same oath as perfect foreigners. This is the opinion of the best informed at Boston and I think it conformable to justice. Even if Mr. H.H. could hold, there would be endless difficulties, for he must in case of decease bequeath in trust and upon understanding the subject clearly I find very little risk or inconvenience attending the tenure we shall be obliged to. There can be no difficulty in finding honest trustees and even they could not injure us, as they will always be checked by Bingham himself; without his concurrence nothing can be disposed of. The law on naturalization is very strict and positive and no exceptions could be carried through; the right of naturalizing is not reserved by the constitution to Congress but only the right of enacting a law on the subject which was to act uniformly through the continent, which has been done. Individual states have granted particular privileges to foreigners to hold lands, which does not regard the federal but the state governments. New York gave it to Mr. Ellis but refused it since to Augerstein and others.³ Massachusetts has never granted it and it would be difficult with great interest and intrigue to move them to it. Even then the privileged person could not leave his estate to foreigners so that the difficulty might return and I believe on

¹ I believe this to have been the temporary contract drawn up on 1 May 1796, to serve until the final arrangement with trustees could be decided upon.

² Baring had at first supposed that because Henry Hope had been born in America, he was still an American citizen and thus could hold lands in this country in his own name. See Baring to Hope and Company, 26 February 1796, in BaP.

³ From several indirect references in BaP, I believe that Augerstein was a correspondent of the Barings in Hamburg. An Ellis family is mentioned as active in land speculation in upper New York State and possibly the first Ellis was the foreigner referred to here. See *History of the State of New York* (A. C. Flick, editor), v. 189.

due consideration that it will be best to put the property immediately in trust, as I see no disadvantage you can thereby be placed under. In Pennsylvania foreigners can hold lands but the law expires next spring and its renewal is very doubtful. The country people who compose seven eights of the state legislatures argue this subject differently in different states. It is by some thought that the attraction of foreigners' capital enhances the value of their farms and by others that the monopoly of large tracts prevents settlements. Both positions are certainly true and the only question is whether the benefit or injury is greatest. I at first intended fixing our trustees at Boston, but I find on reflection that for the dispatch of business it will be best to have them here, as they must join with Mr. B. in all acts and will be near him to discuss any points that may require it. In point of character I am indifferent which is the place, and the advantage of the vicinity of Boston to our lands is removed by the necessary difficulty of obtaining concurrence of the party here. Two persons are sufficient, who will then give power to our agents in Maine to make titles to the extent we may direct. If we afterwards find our agent is a man we can perfectly rely upon, we can give him *carte blanche* with our trustees, but in this we must be cautious and know our character. We run no risk in the first instance to allow our trustees to follow Bingham's directions; he will never do anything that is not for our joint benefit and it will be a proper confidence to shew him.

Upon knowing characters in this country better and being personally acquainted with all leading ones in the places I have been in, I am very much pleased with our selection of Bingham, and can even say that I know none, though many in other respects better, that would have been suited at all for the situation he is in with us. Large property, honour, abilities are seldom found together, but in him the former could not be wished better and the two last are very sufficient and above par as this world goes. There is a littleness about the man in trifles that will make him for instance dispute all the tavern bills on the road, but when he thinks the world looks at him, his pride makes him make up that artificial character which he thinks a man of his fortune should have. He knows how to treat his equals but not his inferiors and is consequently unpopular or he would otherwise have been raised to the Vice President's chair. I believe I understand pretty well both his disposition and his situation; we are on very good terms and always have been, so much so that I am always confidentially consulted on all important business that regards him and could I believe lead him to any thing within tolerable bounds of reason.

In drawing up the articles of agreement all your hints and directions

shall be availed of. I shall not particularize at present, as they are shortly to be sent you. There is only one idea that I shall take the liberty of differing with you concerning, which is the term of association, which you wish to be long. I am of the contrary opinion, for in case we should differ on any subject, our hands on both sides would be bound up and each would have the other in his power. On the otherhand, if the term is found too short, we can always prolong it during pleasure and you may depend upon it that the association can be desirable to neither as soon as either party feel a disposition to dissolve it. I feel myself so confident in my reasoning that I shall make the term five or six years. I am submitting the papers relative to our speculation with every information necessary to Mr. H. R. Hope, the benefit of whose judicious remarks and reflections I am now happy to be able to avail of. If you could send over a copy of my letter of last spring, it would bring it before him in a more regular manner and give him a more correct idea of the whole than cursory conversation can do.

I shall say nothing at present on the department of finance as before I leave this I shall settle all accounts and send you a correct detail with a seperate letter on that subject.⁴ I have taken upon myself a measure which I thought both politic and proper and I am persuaded will meet your approbation. Knox, though the proprietor of very valuable landed estates, was in pecuniary difficulties, chiefly in consequence of a disappointment in the payment of a sum of money due to him for some lands sold. Bingham, before our departure, had several times enquired if I could not make an advantageous sale of some of his property or advance money on it. I always evaded the thing as handsomely as I could and shifted it on Bingham, who has actually advanced him upwards of £10/M sterling at different times, but is secured by his owing Knox an undivided share of profits on 300/M acres of the Maine lands to be accounted for when the speculation is wound up. During our stay at Knox's he made through B. a direct application to me to lend him some money on the mortgage of parts of the Waldo Patent, stating that it would relieve his difficulties and I consented to give him 17,500 dollars or about £4,000 sterling at legal interest of 6 per cent for his notes due the 1st January 1798, but as I told B. I did not wish to enter into any discussion about his lands and that my situation would not permit me to expose myself to any excuse at maturity which might make you question my prudence, he might secure himself as he pleased and enter into an engagement to take up the notes

⁴ Baring did just this in a letter dated Philadelphia, 31 January 1797, in BaP.

if Knox did not and that his name would satisfy me. In this manner it is arranged and the whole extent of the liberty I have taken is to lend out £4,000 of your money at 6 per cent for a year, for as to security I look upon it to be as good as if it was in the funds of the country. The application from the quarter it came from could not well be refused if the security had been less certain and by complying we have acquired the gratitude of one of the best characters in this country, the man who will be constantly superintending our property and who will shortly be governor of Maine. Knox does not know B is become security, the latter having concealed it to induce him to punctuality. The former is consequently additionally pleased with my apparent confidence and particularly with my having refused an exorbitant interest which he offered and which is almost always exacted in this country. I think in this instance that we have done a great deal at very little expence.⁵

Before I left England you had some idea of sharing any purchases that might be made with other friends, which I now observe you have given up. I confess, gentlemen, that from knowing your situation the resolution gave me pleasure, as I firmly believe you will not repent it. But as an object of this kind is so perfectly speculative I have been constantly troubled with apprehensions that my ideas and consequent representations are too sanguine and my wish is that you should principally attend to my statement of facts and scrutinize my conclusions and opinions with your more solid judgement. My theories, such as they are, I can not however refrain from imparting to you. I can conscientiously assert that placing myself in your place what I have done for you I would have done for myself and I can with pleasure add that on the acquisition of additional experience and information I never have one moment regretted what has been done. This letter has insensibly grown so voluminous that I will confine it to the subject of our speculation and write separately though perhaps by the same conveyance on other subjects. I am ever with the greatest respect and attachment

Gentlemen, your sincerely devoted humble servant

ALEXR. BARING

[Endorsed: 26 December 1796]

When the party of pleasure left aboard the Portland packet for the westward, at the end of August, it was with the feeling

⁵ Bingham eventually had to pay this loan of Knox's. There are many references to it and to Knox's inability to pay in BP and KP. There is a copy of Knox's obligation to Baring, dated Thomaston, 6 October 1796, in BP.

that the tour had been a great success,⁶ as the following "bread-and-butter letter" shows.

Bingham to Knox, Portland, 31 August 1796 [KP]⁷

Portland August 31 1796

Our voyage to this place, my dear General, will in great measure compensate for the delays and disappointments we were exposed to, on our eastern excursion. We performed it in eight hours from your house at St. Georges, and six hours from Franklin Island.

The wind was not so violent as to incommode the ladies and they experienced very little sea sickness. We shall take our departure to morrow, and proceed with all convenient expedition to Philadelphia, where I am very desirous of arriving.

I have seen several of the most noted inhabitants of this place, who are surprized at the accounts we have given of the Eastern Country. They seem to have been entirely ignorant and mistaken on the subject.

We all feel most gratefully impressed with the hospitable attentions of your family at St. Georges, which I am requested particularly to express to you by each individual of the party, and to make their affectionate and respectfull compliments to Mrs. and Miss Knox not forgetting Miss Julia.⁸

You will oblige me by facilitating the forwarding a copy of the citation to appear, as well as the bill filed in chancery, by Colonel Walker. The person who notified the same to me, promised he would expedite the business, but he may be inattentive thereto. The clerk of the district court, I am informed, lives on the Kennebeck.⁹

The session of the court will be in December next and there is no time to lose.

God bless you. My best wishes will attend you in your present and all other of your pursuits.

Yours sincerely and affectionately
WM. BINGHAM

⁶ W. O. Sawtelle, in *Publications of the Genealogical Society of Pennsylvania*, ix. 224, suggests that Alexander Baring may have first begun to court Bingham's daughter Ann, whom he was to marry two years later, while on this excursion to Maine.

⁷ KP, xxxix. 134.

⁸ Julia was Knox's eighth child. She, like so many of the others, died in infancy. See *Bangor Historical Magazine*, v. 130.

⁹ For Walker's suit, see above, p. 171.

Bingham to Cobb, Philadelphia, 24 September 1796 [CP]

Philadelphia September 24th 1796

Dear General:

After a very pleasant excursion, we arrived here yesterday, in good health and spirits.

The first object that will attract my attention will be a settlement with Mr. Baring and the formation of a plan of operations for the improvement of the lands under your superintending care.

In order to effect these objects, it is essentially necessary that I should receive your account of expenditures, as it is from their dates that I must ascertain whether they belong to the *old* or the *new* concern. I think you had better transmit your accounts in the form of an account current, in which you will give credit for all the monies you have received as well as supplies forwarded to you by General Jackson, as well as the amount of drafts passed on me. You will then ballance the same by charging the concern with your annual compensation and with the various expenditures that have been made, a detailed account of which will be necessary, as they must be arranged under their proper heads, in the entries made of them.

This will be more desirable, as General Jackson in the account he has furnished, has referred to you for a specific account of the articles, and has only mentioned the sum total. I regret exceedingly that a settlement should be delayed on this account and that after so long a period has elapsed, I have not the means of exhibiting to Mr. Baring, the appropriations of the monies that have been drawn for, and which he is desirous of seeing. I hope to receive them in a short time, as you promised to forward them immediately on your arrival at Gouldsborough.

I wish you would make some enquiries relative to Shaws late purchases—from whom he procured them, the price he gave, your opinion of their value, the motives that probably induced the purchases on his part, whether the amount has been paid to the parties, and whether deeds have been given and the premises are entirely unincumbered. General Jackson, possessing the most implicit confidence in Shaw, has paid him the greatest part of the consideration money, and has received no title nor even a discriptive list of the purchases. I have little reliance on this man, and therefore wish to be guarded in all my transactions with him. The want of these deeds will be another obstacle to my settlement with Mr. Baring, who with his habits of precision and punctuality, is not a little astonished at the difficulties I meet with. I wish they may not indispose him to the object.

Please to inform me whether Mr. Jones has entered satisfaction for the mortgage on Trenton and Mount Desert.¹

I shall write you more particularly in a short time, and am, with best compliments to your family, in which the gentlemen of our party sincerely join

Dear General

Your obedient humble servant

WM. BINGHAM

General Cobb

*Cobb to Knox, Gouldsborough, 27 September 1796 [KP]*²

My old friend:

Gouldsboro' September 27th 1796

Four days after leaving your house I arrived here. I cannot say much for Scrub, that I road to Camden. I hope he was returned in safety. The surveyor and his party are now running out No. 17, and the settlers that are with him are much pleased with their choice of this township. My difficulties are, and all times will be so great in obtaining surveyors, not to say any thing of the extra expence of our present mode, that it would be madness not to employ such a character with the chainmen by the year. Gleason told me he would write to a friend of his for this purpose. Do ask him about it. I am this day going with two lawyers, Wilde and Nelson,³ to see the surveyor and the Township No. 17. We shall return here by Fryday, and on Sunday I shall go with them to Machias, where I shall endeavour to place the logging business on some better footing. This is one of the most disagreeable things in the concern of this country. The habits of the people are so fix'd in this business, and their attachments are so strong, that few are willing to undertake the execution of my orders, and none honest enough to do it. Those I trusted last year, I find on examination are villains or fools. Our friend the Colonel here has deceiv'd me in every instance, and yet I am so situated that I cannot resent it, but at the risk of suffering greater evils. What can I do? This business of cutting timber must be restrain'd, or this country can never have any value.

I have not yet receiv'd any letters from Bingham. I desir'd him to place a small fund at Boston for my drafts. I do not yet want it, but I shall when

¹ J. C. Jones, a Boston merchant, held a mortgage on part of what was formerly the De Gregoire grant. See Cobb to Eli Forbes, Gouldsborough, 2 December 1796, in CP.

² KP, XXXIX. 160.

³ Job Nelson of Castine. See W. Willis, *History of the Law, the Courts and the Lawyers of Maine*, 188-192. Gleason was one of Knox's agents on the Waldo Patent.

the surveyor has done his business, not only for him but for purchases of saw mills that I have now in train. To be disappointed would be ruinous to my proceedings.

Let me hear from you frequently. My compliments, and affectionate ones, to the ladies.

Adieu,

D. COBB

I should be happy in seeing the Duke and Mr. Gilmor,⁴ if they will put up with a matrass and not sleep long in the morning, to whom present me.

*Cobb to Bingham, Gouldsborough, 14 October 1796 [BP]*⁵

My dear Sir:

Gouldsboro' October 14th 1796

This letter is chiefly intended to cover my accounts of old and new concern up to September 1st 1796.⁶ I hope they will meet your approbation, especially when you reflect that all new operations in new countries must be very expensive. I am sure I have found it so, and thence I am much more in your debt than I had any idea of untill the accounts were posted. I hope I shall find it less expensive in future.

On my return from St. Georges to this place, I engaged the surveyor for Township No. 17 on the Narraguagus. He has been on that business since the 12th of September and will finish the township by the 1st of November. The settlers who are with him are much pleas'd with the land. The purchase of the saw mills are now in train and the rebuilding that on the western river of Gouldsboro' will be contracted for in the course of this month. Two carpenters whom I have procured from the westward are now at work finishing the house on the Point near to where I live.

Since the middle of September I have been mostly absent on a tour to Machias and eastward with an intention of looking into the logging business of last year and to regulate it for the future. On my return from thence, ten days since, I only escaped drowning in fording Chandlers River, eight miles on this side of Machias. The rapidity of the current trip'd my horse and swept me down the river. My little art of swimming, which I have not exercis'd for fifteen years before, enabled me to reach the shore, twelve rods below, altho incumber'd with my great coat, but so exhausted

⁴ La Rochefoucauld-Liancourt and Robert Gilmor, Jr.

⁵ There is another, almost identical, copy of this letter in CP.

⁶ These accounts are in CP. For a general statement of the finances of the Maine speculation, see the Appendices.

as to be incapable of rising for some minutes. I escaped, thank God, with only the rheumatism for which I am now cloath'd in flannel. The logging in that part of the country for the last year will neat about three hundred dollars. This deficiency has arisen from two causes: the one, that as this was the first time they had ever been restrain'd, it was advis'd, by the wise and prudent, that the premium should be less than the one directed—by this means the mode adopted did not amount to more than one twentieth instead of one eighth of the boards; the other was, that numbers who had been accustomed to log on these lands refus'd to pay anything and therefore cut all their logs on the townships adjoining, say Nos. 13, 14, 15 and 18 of Eastern Divisions.⁷ Townsley has acted fairly in his agency as far as I have yet discover'd, but our friend Jones has deceiv'd me in every instance, I cannot git any return from him, and I believe it is his intention not to make any. He has certainly been the greatest trespasser of any. What can I do with such a fellow? Shall I make war upon him? I am fearfull he is a man of too much influence to break with at present. I am endeavouring to evade this fellow's craft, by finding out from the surveyors of boards what quantity have been cut at such mills where none but our logs can be had, and to whom they belong. By this means I will git something. I hope in future to put this business upon some better footing, if possible, but it is extreemly difficult to find an honest man in the country capable of doing it; indeed the best mode, and the only good one, is to possess the mills, and then all this plunder must be accounted for.

I am much disappointed in not hearing from you at Boston. It was certainly intended that funds should have been left for me there, for the purchase of the two mills, for rebuilding one, for finishing the house on the Point, and for paying the survey of No. 17. The last two objects are now in operation, the last almost finish'd, the others are in train and would have been compleated by this, as they ought to have been, if funds had been provided.

You will hear from me again very shortly.

I am sir, with esteem, your
obedient servant

DAVID COBB

My best wishes attend Mr. Bearing to whom present me respectfully and affectionately. I should be happy in hearing from him.

⁷ No. 13 is the present Marion township, No. 15 the town of Cooper, and the other two are still unincorporated.

Knox to Cobb, Montpelier, 18 October 1796 [CP]

Montpelier 18 October 1796

My dear Cobb:

I have unpardonably omitted writing to you in reply to your kind favor. My sensations have however been excited in a manner that evinced how much I loved you by being told by Mr. Wild of your escape from drowning. It seems the great impending evil of the country. The viscount in the Schodiac, the Duke in the St Georges, and you in Pleasant River. What a succession of paragraphs if the catastrophe had happened to you all. By the Lord, it would have injured the country beyond calculation. I pray you be not drowned—nor hang yourself nor any other act which may come under the description of suicide.

I would you were in a more agreeable situation. I think the Penobscot would be better, but I submit I am every day increasing in my attachments to this place. My mills begin to operate. My dam is excellent, answers perfectly, and opens an interior navigation of thirteen miles. I shall have a party logging upon my own land about twenty miles above my mills this winter, sufficient to get four millions of feet of boards, and I expect to be able in the freshets, this fall and in the spring, to get them down. The vessel will be launched by the 15th next month, and most excellent she is as well in workmanship as materials. My brick making is finished for the season, and I have discharged all the hands, excepting five who are to get wood and clay for the next season. We are ploughing about twenty acres of land.

We expect to leave this about the 15 or 20th of next month.

You have seen the Presidents farewell address—a glorious setting sun. The French are pushing all Europe like the ram in the Revelations, and threaten to take all neutrals like pirates.

Pray could you, in your neighbourhood, purchase 10 or 20,000 feet of *clear seasoned* boards and send them to me? No? You say its impossible to send them? Well [torn] I was to send for them, could they be had let me.

Present our affectionate respects to Mrs. Cobb. Your son [?] Cobb we hear is in Boston.

The Bingham left us the 30th August since which I have not received a line excepting from Portland which they reached in seven hours.

Yours ever

H. KNOX

*Cobb to Knox, Gouldsborough, 19 October 1796 [KP]*⁸

Gouldsboro' October 19th 1796

My old friend:

What are you about? Not a word from you or any of our friends since I left your house. Bingham, I believe, has given this country up, and I suppose I go with it, for I have not heard from him or Bearing, altho they promis'd particularly to write me from Boston and to make such provision for me there as would be necessary to meet the purchases they directed me to make here. My surveyor and his men have almost completed the survey of No. 17, and I have two carpenters, whom I procured from the westward, now at work on the house near my nest. The settlers who are with the surveyor are much pleas'd with the township they have chosen to reside in. If I could git them well settled down and making improvements there, their old acquaintances and friends would soon follow them.

Mr. Wilde, I suppose, has inform'd you of my escape from seeing our friends in the other world a little sooner than I wish'd. It was only an escape—one minute more and I must have given up. I desire to thank God I am still among the living, altho' I have lost all my old friends and acquaintance, and have at present a rheumatism that has obliged me to be cloath'd in flannel, but life with all these disagreeables is certainly preferable to death, especially a drowning one. Falstaff did not like it, and from the experience I have had, I like it as little.

How is your health? How go you on in your various operations and what are your prospects of success in those and others of your designs? Do the sheep, hogs and cattle flourish on Brigadier's Island,⁹ and are the mairs and colts at home in good health? You have such numbers of these with you, and your quantity of forage is so small in proportion, that I have been almost tempted to take those two undersiz'd mares, provided they are with fole and the terms could be made easy.

What is the state of politics? The President I see is gone at last. The French are uncheck'd; I could wish the insolence of nations might be curb'd, if it could be done without adding a greater degree of it to those who effect it in others.

Mrs. Cobb is in her usual state of health, and rather depress'd, especially since her daughter and Miss Barnum¹ went to the westward. Their re-

⁸ KP, xxxix. 177.

⁹ The present Islesboro.

¹ Miss Barnum was Deborah Barnum, the daughter of the Reverend Caleb Barnum of Taunton. See S. H. Emery, *History of Taunton*, 217.

turn is daily expected. Our compliments to Mrs. Knox and Miss Knox. You must not forget me with Washington² and the girls. Let me hear from you for God's sake.

Adieu

D. COBB

*Cobb to Bingham, Gouldsborough, 30 October 1796 [BP]*³

My dear Sir:

Gouldsboro' October 30th 1796

Your letter of the 24 ultimo came to hand by the last mail, four weeks after date. My accounts for the last year I hope you have receiv'd by this time, as they went from this to Boston by water. I believe they are drawn out in the manner you wish.

All the purchases that I know of, which were made by Shaw in this town the last year, are on this Point. They were made at the request of General Jackson who receiv'd your orders for that purpose. They are four in number—Doctor Allen, Mr. Wright, Mr. Godfrey, and the heirs of a Mr. Newning.⁴ These were all intitled to one hundred acres of land in the township including the lots they owned on the Point, and I think Wright was intitled to two hundred acres. To Doctor Allen, Shaw gave two hundred pounds in cash and has a clear deed of the property. Their is a decent little house and a good barn on the estate. One of the settlers now lives in the house. Mr. Wright receiv'd three hundred pounds. Some of it was discounted for a debt, the rest is now due for which Shaw's obligations are held. Wright gave a deed of this property but his wife would not sign it. It consists of two front lots on the Point and extending back perhaps fifty acres, with a poor house and barn, some ragged out houses and a bad tan yard. Mr. Godfrey's consists of the decent new house, that I am finishing with the fish house and fish yard, being a front lot, for which Shaw gave him six hundred dollars in cash. There was some dispute with Godfrey respecting his title to this estate, which I believe is the reason of its being cheaper than the rest, but whatever title he had Godfrey gave a clear deed of it to Shaw. The estate belonging to Newning's heirs is a front lot running back twenty or thirty acres. What title Shaw has to it or what

² Knox's fifth son. For his children, see *Bangor Historical Magazine*, v. 129–130.

³ There is an almost identical copy of this letter in CP.

⁴ Dr. Allen was presumably Dr. Benjamin Alline, first treasurer of the town. See *Historical Researches of Gouldsborough, Maine*, 19. The others are presumably Benjamin Godfrey, Daniel Wright, and Abigail Noonan, all listed under Gouldsborough in the 1790 census.

he gave for it I know not. He only told me when he was here that he had obtain'd this lot from Newning's widow and children and could dispose of it to you. The prices given by Shaw for these estates, tho' very high in my estimation, were as little as they could be obtain'd for from the owners. But as I am extremely jealous of this man and have no opinion of his honor, I should suspect that when he gives the list of these estates, he will put in others that he has in the town, under the idea of purchase, and at such prices as he has heretofore receiv'd for some of the property here, which is at least double if not three prices of the value. None of which will be of any use to you excepting the old mill seat, and for that he demands three times its worth. The places purchas'd on the Point will be of use to the concern, altho' at present you must give more than their value.

I have not heard anything of Jones's release of the mortgage on Mount Desert and Trenton, but if you left it with General Jackson to be transacted, it is probably done and sent to Penobscott for recording.

The deeds I receiv'd from you at General Knox's, are recorded and are now with me. They shall be sent to you whenever a convenient opportunity presents. They are too large to be transmitted by the mail unless you request it.

A late occurrence here compels me again to mention the advantages that would result from having two or three good houses built at this place. A whaleman with his vessel and family came in here from Cape Cod with an intention of residing and pursuing the whale and cod fisheries out of this port, but the want of a house to accomodate his family compell'd him to go to Dyers Bay, next east of this, where he has got a shelter, and perhaps we have lost him for ever. I could now rent two houses to the families of masters of vessels that sail from this and Frenchman's Bay. Those who come to this country to persue the fisheries or trade will certainly sett down in those places (and all in this neighborhood are equal for these pursuits) that are best accommodated for their reception—and the goodness of this harbour will always give it a preference if other accommodations are equal. Since I have mentioned the subject of improvements, I cannot but observe to you the necessity of having a surveyor and chainmen attach'd to the concern, boats procur'd for passing to the different parts of the purchase, roads to be cutt, let them cost what they may, and on certain places on these roads, houses should be built for entertainment. The very report that such operations are going on in this country will raise the value of it beyond any calculation, and will turn the attention of all New England to this country. Such measures will enhance your property more in one week, than puffing in seven years.

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My power for the sale of land expires the 1st. November. I have not used it in any instance, but I have promis'd to settlers, lots in Trenton, Mount Desert, now Eden, Nos. 7, 11, 12, and 17, and in No. 7 on the Schudic.⁵ They must be survey'd and the bounds known before they can be convey'd; I have likewise engaged the little island near the narrows, where Mr. Baring run the mud race and which the little Frenchman that was on board of us, wanted, for four dollars per acre, which price I wish you in your next letter to me to mention as the lowest sum you will take for it, having part of the purchase pay'd down, and the remainder in three or four years, the first year without interest. Mount Desert, now Eden, is settling fast. Many have spoke for lots there who are the sons of the old settlers. The shore lands of Trenton will sell for three dollars per acre, but we cannot yet dispose of them. This purchase of De Gregoire will much more than make good your bad one of Shaw.

My want of funds will probably deprive the concern of the use of the saw mills, that were design'd to be purchas'd, for this season. Money cannot be laid out to more advantage than in the purchase of such mills. They will produce annually from 20 to 40 per cent of their purchase; but what is of more importance, you secure the whole of the proportion for the logs taken off the lands.

The new double mill at Narraguagus will cost two thousand dollars at least. I am fearfull I cannot obtain it for that. The single mill in No. 7, five hundred dollars. The rebuilding of the old mill as much more. This, however, I shall not at present agree to, as I think it too much. The survey of No. 7, which is now finish'd, at $2\frac{1}{2}$ dollars per lot, amounts to 360 dollars, and the compleating of the house on the Point to as much more perhaps. I think Mr. Bearing promis'd me funds should be left at Boston for these purposes.

I have now to request your attention to the subject (a very painfull one to me) that I mentioned at the time of my parting with you at General Knox's. I suppose you have made Mr. Bearing acquainted with it before this, and I sincerely hope that you are now in a situation to afford me the assistance I so much want, as I have engaged myself to the Treasurer of the Commonwealth that what I owe the State should be paid in the course of the ensuing month. On failure, I shall be distress'd exceedingly.⁶ Indeed. I shall not know what to do. The sum I want is 3,500 dollars

⁵ No. 7 north of Gouldsbrough is still unincorporated. The others are the present towns of Cherryfield, Columbia, Deblois, and Baileyville, respectively.

⁶ Cobb's debt to the state was presumably the money due on the purchase of his Androscoggin lands in what is now Leeds.

which will liberate me from all embarasments. The mode of repayment you may arrange as you please from my annual stipend. If I should do otherwise than well, my estate at Taunton will be your security or your contract with me here. I beg of you not to fail me.

I have always Mr. Bearing in remembrance.

Adieu and believe me sincerely

yours

D. COBB

Cobb to Knox, Gouldsborough, 4 November 1796 [KP]⁷

My dear Friend:

Gouldsborough November 4th. 1796

By yesterday's mail I received your letter of 18th ultimo. Rum and the waters of this country are the only avenues the people have to the other world. But for these and a little old age the inhabitants would be immortal, for they have no diseases. I never hear'd before that the Duke had taken his tour of drowning.

It gives me pleasure to hear you are so much pleas'd with your operations. Your mills must be good, and I have no doubt they will be profitable. You have one evil, however, to encounter, and that is a passage way thro' your dam for the fish to pass up in the spring. I think you have not made provision for this, and it is of importance; for however well effected the people of Warren are towards you, yet this subject of fish will let them loose upon you to the destruction of your dam if you do not make this provision. On this subject *this good creature call'd man* cannot be restrain'd by any laws.⁸

I have 6 or 7,000 of season'd clear boards, not the best, which are the only boards of the kind in this country. They were to have been the best and 12,000 in quantity, but our friend Jones has cheated me in the quality and deceiv'd me, as he has in every thing else, in quantity. You may have them if you please, but they are hardly worth sending for.

It is a matter of great indifference to me where I reside in this country, if I had a good house to live in. I expected to make every sacrifice of present comfort, in expectation of future reward. I fear very much, I shall be deceiv'd. The concern do not conduct this business in the manner they do their other operations. They directed me, when I parted with them at your house, to make purchases of mills and to erect others etc., as would

⁷ KP, XL, 10.

⁸ Cobb would know how the people of Warren felt about this because his son-in-law, Samuel Wilde, lived there.

amount to near 4,000 dollars and promis'd to leave funds at Boston for this purpose. They have left none, intending to consult at Philadelphia what to do; and by a letter from Bingham of 24th September, the day after his arrival there, it appears, they are still consulting. By this means, they will loose another season of profit from mills and from the lumber taken from the lands. I am very anxious on this subject, perhaps too much so, but I know that all failures that take place in the operations here will naturally be laid at my door, and it is a burthen that I am very unwilling to bear for 1,500 dollars a year. I am certain, unless different measures are persued with their property here and that very soon, I shall be very willing to return back to my lost honors with some poverty, than to reside here in disgrace. If they doubt my integrity or ability, I ought not to be employ'd. I have sent Bingham my accounts of the last year some time since, and I have lately represented to him the necessity of more attention to his affairs here. I am determin'd at present not to draw upon him for any thing, 'tho' I am under engagements for near 800 dollars here. But I shall make no further contracts. The property of this country is rapidly advancing. I have engaged, not less than twenty settlers lots since you was here, and I have bargain'd a little island for four dollars per acre. As you are going for Boston, will you be my correspondent there for the winter, just to inform me once in a week or fortnight, how you and others spend your time? And don't fail of writing by every post as long as you stay at St. George's. Mrs. Cobb joins me in respectfull remembrance to the family. Mary return'd last evening from Boston. Harry d---n him almost, [torn] not give me a letter tho' on business.

Adieu

D. COBB

Knox to Cobb, Montpelier, 12 November 1796 [CP]

Montpelier 12 November 1796

My dear Friend:

Your favor of the 19th ultimo is before me. It has lain on my table since I received it, and has like a bad conscience been an unceasing reproach. I intended to reply to it the first foul day which should compel me to keep house but no such opportunity presented, as all the weather at Montpelier is fine, and so I have taken a portion of precious time of the evening which Mrs. Knox and myself devote to our charming amusement of chess.

I have received but two short letters from Mr. Bingham since his departure, the one dated Portland and the other on the 8th of the last month in Philadelphia. The last was not so full of hope and good expectation as I

presume his visit entitled him to entertain. He speaks of the success of the French, the alarms of the English, and the depreciation of their funds, as causes which must prevent the rise of our lands. He complains that he has not received a line from you since his departure and particularly that Baring was urging for the accounts of the disbursements which you promised to transmit to him. Pray, my dear friend, write him a minute history of every existing thing, and of every thing which ought to exist on his lands and how they ought to be conducted in order to make them most profitable. The lands may in five years be made to bring an incredible price, but they must be first made known. I have invariably refused to sell at less than 20/ per acre and in one instance I have sold for £40 for one acre and only 100 feet on the road. I am treating with a great number of Quakers, who are much pleased with my lands, and I think it probable I shall sell them considerable quantities. I do not mean by townships, but so that each actual settler may have from 1 to 400 acres. But write to Mr. B. and send his accounts. Urge him to establish funds, or draw upon him for such as you find essential. I rejoice for the sake of your friends that you were not transmitted to another grade of existence. I hope you will long continue to irradiate and cheer them.

My affairs here interest and please me exceedingly inasmuch as I am more happy than at any other period of my adult age.

My mills bid fair to be profitable provided I can obtain an abundance of logs before the winter sets in. I have a party at the logging business which after this week will not be less than 20 men and sixteen yoke of oxen. They will generally cut 200 logs per day, each averaging 250 feet of boards. Hence you may calculate upon my getting a considerable number of logs, but whether I shall get them to my mills will depend upon a freshet before the winter sets in. I have enlarged the old mill so as to saw plank 50 feet in length. It is now an 100 feet long, but I intend to add 20 feet more in the spring so as to saw lumber 60 feet in length. My new mill operates well and I shall expect to get from it a cargo for my vessel. She will be ready to be launched in seven days, will be about 140 tons federal measure, rigged into a brig and I beleive called the *Quantibaycook*. She would answer well for the West India trade, but there are so many devils there that I fear to risque her, among them. I can load her with bricks, lime, or lumber, or combine them.

We have been busy in ploughing up new land. We have turned up about 35 or 40 acres. We are now busy in getting manure for it. Already we have upwards of an hundred cart loads of rock weed and 100 casks of lime.

Other excellent manures we have upon the farm such as swamp mud—a rich black mould formed of shells—sea sand, and sea mud and mill river mud.

You will perceive that all these things occupy me much. Besides Vose⁹ has gone to Boston on my account for goods for a store. I have a vessel just returned from Philadelphia with nearly a thousand bushels of corn for a cargo of spars I sent thither.

My mares and colts are well. One of the mares which you mention is not nor was she the last year with foal. The other has a colt. They are fine blood, but bad breeders. They would be excellent for a phateon [*sic*], but too light for the saddle or a larger carriage.

The colts promise great things. Brigadier Island has done well—12 barrells of salmon, 200 weight of wool, five hundred weight of cheese, and two or three hundred weight of butter has been the revenue. My win-ters wood to the amount of 65 cords has been and will be sent to Boston, and I have contracted to have 2,000 cords cut and carried to the landing this winter, which will cost me 4/ per cord, the teaming to be done with my oxen. I hope you will not call this egotism, but the communications of a friend in pursuance to your inquiries. Burn, burn it therefore as soon as you have read it.

Buonaparte is my hero. How charming! how modest! If his army will stand by him, depend upon it he will not be ill treated by the Council of 500, the Council of the Elders, the Directory nor any other person or body whatever! I pity Wurmser, poor old fellow, to have his laurels torn from his brow, the growth of almost an age, by a boy, a surgeon! But he must not heal, nor can he heal Buonaparte. My little Caroline will not suffer that. What a devil of drubbing has the Arch Duke given Jourdan! day after day! pushing him like the ram in the Revelations! Have you seen the message of the Directory to the Council of 500, respecting the army of *the Interior*? What a melancholy picture! Not a sous for soldiers, not a comfort for the hospitals. They have exhausted every mean of requisition and they *can no more*! An explosion may be expected. The Spaniards will have to pay a serious reckoning for their entering into the war with Great Britain. Indeed, my old fellow, there does appear to be an hell of an uproar in Europe! Are not we happy in being out of the scrape?¹

⁹ Vose was Captain Thomas Vose, Knox's superintendent on the Waldo Patent. See N. Brooks, *Henry Knox*, 240.

¹ In Europe, Napoleon was whipping the Austrians under Wurmser as part of his Italian campaign, while the French armies on the Rhine, under Jourdan, were being beaten. The Spanish had joined the French in 1796. See *Cambridge Modern History*, VIII. 497, 572-573, 460.

The federal interest in Pennsylvania and Maryland seems to have gained ground in the late elections although Johnny Swanwick² is again reelected. Mr. Wild, who dined here yesterday, says General Dearborn had but one vote in the Waldo Patent from Waldoborough to Ducktrap inclusively.³ Mostly for Parker. Mrs. Wild and young family are perfectly well.

Having the itch upon me, I could write you much more, but my paper ends and chess is the word. Our respects to Mrs. Cobb and your family.

Your affectionate

H. KNOX

General D. Cobb

Stephen Jones to Cobb, Machias, 17 November 1796 [CP]

Dear Sir:

Machias November 17th 1796

I receivd per last post, your letter of the 30th ultimo.⁴ I shall pay particular attention to your request respecting the cutting of lumber on the lands of the proprietors, whom you represent.

I am fully of your opinion that it would be much better for the people concerned in lumbering buisness, in a great measure, if not wholly to quit it; and attend to the farming buisness; but they have been so long in the habit lumbering, that it would be very difficult for them to quit altogether, especially at this particular time, when the price of every necessary is so very high. Should they be wholly prohibited from cutting logs, it would render the situation of many almost desperate, and be the means of driving them out of the county, and Commonwealth.

I think the best method of coming at the value will be (after they finished their winter logging) to estimate what the logs will be likely to make, when sawed; and take each ones obligation for the amount, to be paid in boards, when the logs are sawed; for if it is let alone until the logs are sawed, in order to come at the quantity, there will be room for considerable jockeying in the buisness, by turning [?] of the boards without a surveyor, and pretending many of the logs are stoped, on the falls, and in the lakes, and of course are not sawed. I am of opinion that your letter gives me sufficient authority to do what is necessary in the buisness at pres-

² John Swanwick was a Republican representative from Philadelphia.

³ Henry Dearborn had served as Representative in Congress for the District of Maine from 1793-1797. A Republican, he was defeated in the 1796 election by Isaac Parker, later Chief Justice of Massachusetts.

⁴ This letter of instructions on the supervision of the lumbering business is in CP.

ent; but any further advice that you think necessary, be pleased to communicate it to me. I am of oppinion that it will be best to run the north line of No. 19 as there is some persons that log on our river that pretend they are within that township, and we cannot determine wheither they are within it, accepting the line is run.

Mrs. Jones and daughter, present their compliments to you, Mrs. Cobb, and family, to which I add my own.

I am with sentiments of esteem and friendship

Your most obedient servant

STEPHEN JONES

Cobb to Donald Ross,⁵ Gouldsborough, 2 December 1796 [CP]

Gouldsboro' December 2d. 1796

Sir:

On the recommendation of our mutual friend Mr. Sherriff Hunnewell⁶ I take this occasion of troubling you with this letter to know whether you will undertake the superintendance of the lumber that is bro't down the Union River from the lands of Mr. Bingham whom I represent; if you should be so kind as to undertake this business, it will be necessary for you to have the following information and regulations to direct your conduct. It has ever been the wish of the proprietor that the timber on his lands should have been preserved intire for the benefit of the settlers who may hereafter improve the lands, but the habits of the present inhabitants of this country are so fix'd, and their living depends so much on the logging business, that out of charity to this necessity, he has consented to permit the lumber to be taken from his lands on these conditions: that no trees that are fit for masts should be cutt; and that he should be allow'd one eighth of the boards, at the mills, that are made from the logs thus taken off, and such proportion for any other kinds of lumber as is customary in the country, or such as your judgement shall direct. This proportion to the proprietor is the lowest that is given in any part of the District of Maine, and I have no doubt that the people with you will readily acquies in the

⁵ Donald Ross was a Scotchman who had settled in what is now Ellsworth after the Revolution, where he lived until his death in 1804. His account book, in CP, indicates that he had served in the British navy before coming to this country. See also A. H. Davis, *History of Ellsworth, Maine*, 24, where, however, the dates of Ross's retirement and death are incorrectly given.

⁶ Sheriff Richard Hunnewell (or Hunewell) was a resident of Penobscot, then the shire town, and is frequently mentioned in Cobb's diaries. The name is spelled with one "n" in the *Heads of Families, First Census, Maine*, 30. See also W. Willis, *History of the Law, the Courts, and the Lawyers of Maine*, 685.

terms. If however, any should be so unmindfull of their duty to the society in which they live as to refuse a compliance with them, you will in such a case, be carefull to obtain proper evidence of the trespass they commit, and they shall be prosecuted. The people must certainly be convinc'd that it is high time that a stop should be put to their deprivations upon lands not their own. This same regulation takes place from the Schudic to the Penobscot. Judge Jones has the direction of the business at Machias, and John Brewer, Esquire, at the Schudic.⁷ They find no difficulty with the people there; and I am persuaded, after a proper introduction, you will not, on the Union River. The places that will more particularly call for your attention, are the part of No. 8 adjoining the Union River, No. 14 and all the townships above,⁸ that communicate with that river or its branches. It would likewise be agreeable if you could attend the regulation of this business in Trenton as far as Jordan's River, over such part of that township as belongs to Mr. Bingham, or appoint some faithfull persons there to do the business. Major Jordan has heretofore superintended this business, but as he has made no returns to me, I conclude he has paid no attention to the subject. I shall expect to make you such returns as will be an honorable compensation for the services perform'd. You will be pleas'd to let me hear from you, if possible by the next post, and if you should accept of this trust, you will inform me from time to time how you proceed in the business.

I am sir with esteem
Your obedient servant
D. COBB

Mr. Donald Ross
Union River

Knox to Bingham, Thomaston, 3 December 1796 [BP]

My dear Friend:

Thomaston 3 December 1796.

I ought to have written to you before this time, and I feel as if I had omitted a duty, in not having done it. Certain it is however that my omission is not owing to any diminution of affection or respect. The truth is

⁷ On 30 October 1796 Cobb wrote Brewer a set of instructions similar to those sent Stephen Jones. A copy of this letter is in CP. He resided in what is now Perry, on Passamaquoddy Bay, and is not to be confused with the founder of Brewer, Maine, opposite Bangor.

⁸ Number 8 is the present town of Hancock, No. 14, Waltham. Number 20, Maria-ville, would certainly also have to be supervised.

that having been busy I postponed it from post to post until this time. For a month past, I have been expecting to go to Boston, but have been detained by my affairs (willingly enough) until this period.

I have received two of your favors, since your departure. The one dated at Portland and the other at Philadelphia on the 8th of October. The moment I received the first (which by the bye was not until after it had been to Boston and New Haven) I wrote to Mr. Tinkham at Wiscasset (the deputy Marshall)⁹ who informed me he had about the 10th of September transmitted to General Jackson a copy of the bill of Walker against you, so that I expect, allowing for all detentions, that you must have received it soon after yours of the 8th October. I did not receive your last until the 8th November. I wrote directly to Mr. Tinkham again who informed me that he had sent another copy, on the 18th November for which he charges me seven dollars.

I hope therefore you received the papers by the first transmission, and that you employed able counsel to attend the court.

Since your departure my employment has been considerable. My mills are in operation, and I am preparing a maazaine [magazine?] of logs for a years stock. My expectations are to saw three or four millions of feet of boards and planks of all sorts reduced to inch measure, in the course of about a year. My vessel is launched, being a brig of about 130 tons but will not depart at present.

We ploughed forty acres of land in November, and the autumn was as fine as possible. But on the 25th of that month we had the first snow of about six inches deep. Since then the weather has been unusually cold for the season, inasmuch as I am apprehensive the *Delaware* will be shut by the ice.¹

The last year no ice obstructed this river until January, and the year before the river was not frozen at all. The upper part is now frozen, but it is open at our wharves, and before us now, lay nine vessels loaded waiting for a wind.

We are preparing for Boston. But our son Washington has been and is *very* sick, which renders our departure and progress uncertain. We shall probably go by land, as a water passage is too hazardous and uncomfortable at this season.

It would be fortunate for you and for me provided you could make a good sale of the Kennebec tract. A great portion of the land is excellent

⁹ This was Seth Tinkham. See his letter to Bingham dated Wiscasset, 5 November 1796, in BP, in which he encloses a copy of Walker's bill.

¹ Presumably a reference to one of Knox's ships.

for cultivation and that which is not of the best quality is loaded with an invaluable treasure of timber which is daily encreasing in its value. It is and always has been my impression that the timber only on that tract would at a dollar per acre repay a company all expences and in the course of five years nett them a profit of 100 per cent annually for their money. This is supposing a great capital employed to the best advantage in all respects, as well the cutting, sawing, as the after disposal, of the timber at the best markets.

My situation in this country is as flattering as I ought to wish. Every thing promises to repay me abundantly for my expences and residence here. The people are not only tranquil, but becoming more and more kind and strongly attached.

Lands partly improved to which I have given title sell quick from one to another at high prices. Uncultivated lands are rising much in their value. I have not sold any this year for less than 3. 33/100 dollars at six or seven miles from navigation and I expect to sell still higher to a considerable body of excellent settlers. I have sold small lots on the north side of the road about half a mile from my house, and of course that distance from the water, at 133. 33/100 cents per acre, and only 100 feet fronting the road.

But with all these prospects before me, which I deem really good I want circulating capital to mature my plans.

You have my dear sir been of eminent service to me for which I shall ever love you and yours. It would afford me inexpressible delight to repay the pecuniary obligations immediately, and particularly the eight thousand dollars which you mention. But this I have not the power to do instantly. Nay more I must appeal further to your kindness, by asking some indulgence in the payment of notes to the amount of five thousand dollars, which you endorsed for me in the year 1794 and which become due the 1/3 January next, and for which I gave you my acknowledgement at the time. I ought to have mentioned this circumstance when you was here. But I hoped an arrangement which would have enabled me to pay them when due. Any extra expences you may be at in this affair shall be repaid by me.

If it were possible to induce Mr. Baring to double the loan he made me, that is to extend it 17,500 dollars further, and for the same or a shorter period it would do me an essential service indeed! In this case the 5,000 dollars due the 1st of January could be paid and the remainder left at my disposal. It is with infinite difficulty I have brought my mind to the task of asking this additional favor of him. But the pressure of my affairs, and

my anxious desire to extricate you from this payment, have overcome my reluctance, and I have written a letter accordingly to him by this post. If you will advocate this measure and make it succeed, my obligations and attachment will if possible be increased.

To almost any other person the requests which I now make would at least be attended with uncertainty. But the solid proofs I have had of your friendship and kindness induce me confidently to hope that you will continue me your support.

Mr. Francis, the surveyor,² made some inquiries of me respecting articles of timber wanted for Algiers. I mentioned to him the terms on which I could furnish the most of them, but to which I have received no reply. I suppose therefore that he has provided himself elsewhere. Had we concluded a contract, it would have been of considerable extent and of course furnished me with some funds.

It affords me real satisfaction to learn from several quarters that Mrs. Bingham, the ladies and gentlemen express their approbation of the District of Maine. The visit certainly will ever be precious to my remembrance, and in my judgement it must be of service to the country in its consequences.

Mrs. Knox, Lucy and Julia unite with me in presenting our cordial respects to Mrs. Bingham, Miss Willing, Miss Bingham and Maria.

I hope General Cobb has given you a full and satisfactory statement of affairs under his direction, accounts and all. I have urged him to this effect. He wrote me that he had had No. 17 surveyed, that the settlers had gone on it and were well pleased with it.

We were within a point of having three drownings the summer past. The viscounts (to whom I pray you to give my love), the Duke de Liancourts and General Cobbs, who was swept away by a current in fording a river, and was when taken up at the last gasp.

With perfect affection and respect

I am my dear sir, your friend and servant

H. KNOX

The Honorable William Bingham

² This was Tench Francis, who was in charge of purchasing naval supplies for the government. Knox had a contract with him to provide spars. See Knox to Francis, 13 September and 17 October 1796, KP, xxxix. 143 and 175.

Ross to Cobb, Union River, 6 December 1796 [CP]

Sir:

Union River 6th December 1796

I have the honor to acknowledge receipt of your favor of the 2d instant. Am exceedingly obliged to my good friend, General Hunnewell, for recommending me to your notice; and hope by a marked assiduity and fidelity to my employer to merit it.

I have no objections to accepting the trust you have been pleased to offer me. Am conscious it is rather an unpopular one at present, tho' I have little doubts from my knowledge of the people that with only common adress, and a candid representation of the proprietors intentions, both with respect to indulgence to the compliant, and severity to those resolved to agress, that they will in a little while be willing either to refrain from the depridatory mode they have hitherto followed, or give a reasonable compensation to the proprietor for his timber. Am a little apprehensive that you have fixed the compensation rather high, viz., one eighth. On Mr. Jarvis's grant, Mr. Brimmer asks but one tenth,³ and Mr. La Roche in his day had a ninth from the people of Trenton. However, this I submit to your better judgement and will be determined by your instructions. The part of Trenton which belongs to Mr. Bingham is equally convenient for me to superintend as the rest.

It will be necessary that you forward me by return of post some document authorising me to contract with those that are willing to comply with the proprietor's terms and *generally* empowering me to superintend the business. I will then signify to them personally and particularly the plan you mean to have adopted and then publicly notify it, after which they can have no pretence of aggression, tho indeed am not apprehensive they will persist.

Any services I can render you or Mr. Bingham in this business I will cheerfully and faithfully perform without dread of the *fear or shame* annexed to it.

Trusting to your and his genorisity [*sic*] for such compensation as you think my services may claim,

I have the honor to be

With much respect, sir

Your most obedient humble servant

DONALD ROSS

Honorable David Cobb, Esquire

³ This was George Brimmer, an early settler on Union River and agent for Leonard Jarvis. See *Bangor Historical Magazine*, IV. 73.

*Cobb to Bingham, Gouldsborough, 8 December 1796 [BP]*⁴

My dear Sir:

Gouldsborough December 8th 1796

My last letter was of the 30th of October. The last I receiv'd of yours was under date the 24th of September.

My attention of late has been chiefly directed to placing the lumbering business of this country on its proper footing. Untill this is done, all other regulations will necessarily fail in their effects. Mr. Brewer at the Schudic and Judge Jones at Machias have undertaken to enforce the regulations at those places. Mr. Ross at Union River superintends the business in that quarter. Other inferior characters at other places are likewise engaged to attend to this business in their vicinities. I have met with some difficulty, and it has required great persuasion, to induce characters of any respectability to undertake this business. They wish not to embroil themselves with that herd of people who live by depridation; and as they profit in some degree by this plunder, they injure themselves in their estimation in some proportion as they benefit the proprietor.

I have now almost compleated my arrangements of this business for the season, and from repeatedly conversing with the people and explaining the rights of property to them, I am persuaded that in a short time the present passion for plunder will cease, and agricultural industry succeed. But a constant attention to this subject is necessary and I make it the burthen of all our conversations. I cannot say, indeed, but I shall go forth as an itinerant and have this the subject of my preachments. The fear however of being blanketted may prevent me for the present. The attention of the people here to agriculture for the last year is surprizing, when we consider their habits devoted to lumber and fishing; there is more grain, ten to one, in the ground this winter than ever has been since the country was settled. This affords a happy presage to future improvements.

I have purchased the upper western mill in No. 7 for 550 dollars and have contracted for rebuilding the old mill in Gouldsboro' for 450 dollars. The survey of No. 17 is compleated and I have receiv'd from the surveyor a plan of the township and the field notes. It is particularly fortunate that the lots own'd by the fortunate ticketts are in general the worst land in the township. This evinces the propriety of not purchasing in those rights. The carpenters have almost finish'd their business. The mill at Narraguagus, in No. 11, I shall not at present purchase, as they ask too much for it; I intend to have it however whenever the owners will take what is reasonable.

⁴ There is a copy of this letter in CP.

I have been anxiously waiting for weeks past for your mode of supplying me with funds for my little operations here. I can wait no longer. I shall therefore draw upon you for 1,200 dollars in favor of General Jackson, by the next vessel that sails from this port. You will see that I am under engagements for near 1,800 dollars. All the property of yours that I have in my hands is the ballance on account the rent of the western mill. This indeed I have never receiv'd, but it goes towards the purchase of the mill in No. 7. The proportion of boards due from the Machias people I hold their obligations for. They promis'd to pay them this winter. Whatever is coming for hay that has been taken off the marsh, I must *catch* it in boards and shingles in the spring, and whatever I can git for the last years logging in this part of the country I must take in the same way. The township I contracted with Leonard for he has transferr'd to a Mr. Parsons of Hampshire County who was here last July and promis'd to pay one thousand dollars, as part of the contract, in the months of September or October, but I have not heard from him since. This contract is on interest.⁵

I hope by this time that you and Mr. Baring have made your ultimate determinations respecting this country and the measures to be persued. You cannot fail, let your operations be what they may, of being benefited by them. Only operate, for every shilling you expend in the country will return you tenfold. I could wish that Mr. Baring was concern'd with you in the Kennebeck Million. I am certain, from late information receiv'd from that country, that it is better land than this, and will be sooner fill'd with inhabitants. It is decidedly my opinion the best speculation in this country. The adjoining townships on the western side of this tract are now settling, and those on the southern side have inhabitants in almost all of them, and not less than one hundred and fifty families are now on the tract. Experience has determin'd the fact that interior new countries subsisting by agriculture, will, in a given space of time rise in value much faster than a like quantity dependent on commerce, as a length of time is required to collect such capital by which commerce can enrich any country. Agriculture carries its capital in the industry of every inhabitant.

Some time since I open'd a correspondence with the Treasurer on the subject of the settlers now on the lands. His answer I have not yet receiv'd.

I have lately engaged four lots in this town to settlers, one for four dollars per acre, another for two. The other two are to be at a little harbour, call'd Birch Harbour, between this and Schudic Point. As this place will be

⁵ The Parsons family was an extremely numerous one in Northampton. See J. R. Trumbull, *History of Northampton, passim*. This Parsons had doubtless become interested in Maine through the agency of Cobb's brother-in-law, Dr. Ebenezer Hunt.

very convenient for the fisheries, I intend laying it out into lots before any of it is dispos'd of, as it is delightfully situated for a little fishing town.

If I do not receive from you, very soon, some directions or instructions for my future conduct in this country, either general or particular, I shall not only be much disappointed, but conclude you have forgot you have any interest in the District of Maine.

I am, dear sir, with esteem and respect
Your obedient servant
DAVID COBB

I should be very happy in receiving
a letter from Mr. Baring, to whom
present me affectionately.

Cobb to Bingham, Gouldsborough, 13 December 1796 [BP]⁶

My dear Sir: Gouldsborough December 13. 1796

I have this day drawn on you, in favor of General Jackson at Boston, for 1,200 dollars, which I hope you will honor. Nothing but the necessity of my engagements here has induced me to adopt this mode, as I have heretofore been convinc'd of its being the most expensive to you.

Our winter has come upon us much earlier than usual, and for this fortnight past the cold has been severe. Our bays are frozen up, but the harbour has no ice in it. Snow is eight inches deep.

Tomorrow I shall sett off for the town of Eden (Mount Desert), where and along the shore of Trenton, I propose a tour of ten days, to confirm the virtuous, anathematise the vicious, pay the taxes of the towns, and to make fair promises and offers, to the children of the present settlers, of good farms adjoining their parents.

I am extremely anxious to hear from you, particularly respecting the propos'd advance of 3,500 dollars as the time for the payment of it is now at hand. Indeed, if I should not hear from you in the course of this month, I shall begin to suspect that you think my services are of no use to you here. They will then cease of being any to me.

I am dear sir with esteem
your friend and obedient servant
DAVID COBB

Honorable Mr. Bingham

⁶ There is a copy of this letter in CP.

*Cobb to Knox, Gouldsborough, 13 December 1796 [KP]*⁷

Gouldsboro' December 13th. 1796

My dear Sir:

As you are a bird of passage, I must shoot at you flying, and by directing for you at Boston I shall probably hit you. My last letter, was, thro' the irregularity of the post, detain'd in the office here for a week, and thence probably you did not receive it, 'till after your departure from Montpelier. The early severity of the season has I conceive shut up your vessel in the St. George's. It is extremely disagreeable to have any concern with vessels in the winter, especially in small rivers; I have heretofore experienced the evils of it. I hope your vessel is still on the stocks, she will be much better there than in the water. How did you and the family git to Boston? I hope the time is not far distant when you will cease these peregrinations. Mrs. Knox I know would be perfectly content to reside at Montpelier, but your attachments to the social pleasures of the city are not so easily overcome, and I am fearfull we shall never see you fix'd till you have grown so old as to be useless to yourself and friends, and then perhaps we may find you *busying* yourself at Montpelier about the place for your tomb and the form of it, if you do not git drown'd before that time comes, of which the chances are certainly in favor—or you may be Governor of Maine and be obliged to reside at the capital in the winter. In every view, it seems you are never to reside in winter at Montpelier, and consequently it will take two lives to civilize the Patent.

Not a word from Bingham since September—no funds provided—no arrangements for future operations. I have wrote him repeatedly, and in my last I mentioned that his omitting to write made me suspect that he conceiv'd my services here were of no use to him, and if so, they could be none to me. It is distressing enough to reside here without any additional vexation; and I have made too many sacrifices to be sported with. If I am to be left here I could wish to know it as soon as possible, and if no operations are to be carried on here, I positively will not reside in the country, for my only relief, in a residence among the worst of boors, is having some business to beguile the hours.

I have made engagements agreeably to Bingham's directions, in purchasing mills and rebuilding others, finishing a house upon the Point and surveying a township, for which he has made no provision, 'tho' Baring promis'd to do it before he left Boston. And I have been waiting for his mode of supplying the funds 'till I can wait no longer, as the payments are become due; I have therefore drawn upon him and have sent my son to

⁷ KP, xL. 34.

bring the money to me as soon as possible. I have requested General Jackson to negotiate it. To have such vexations and troubles about the little sum of twelve hundred dollars in the negotiations of this country, where at least five or ten thousand should always be at command and in operation, is too trifling, if any serious exertions are determined upon. It is from such circumstances as these that I have concluded, that, either they have no confidence in me, or they do not intend to conduct the business here as will do honor to them or benefit the concern. If the first, I would quit the country in an hour. If the other, it would disgrace me to stay here. So that in either case I am grossely imposed upon, and have been induced under the most specious promises to make such sacrifices as will never be compensated.

Let me hear from you by every post. It will afford me consolation. And in whatever situation I am placed, you will believe me

Your friend and servant

DAVID COBB

Our compliments to Mrs. Knox, Miss Lucy and the family.

*Bingham to Knox, Philadelphia, 22 December 1796 [KP]*⁸

My dear General:

Philadelphia December 22d 1796

I have to acknowledge receipt of your favor of the 3d instant from Thomaston. I regret that my letter from Portland made such an unaccountable and circuitous a route. I wrote you likewise from Boston, but you do not mention the receipt of this letter.

I have submitted the bill filed in chancery by Colonel Walker to the consideration of Mr. Lewis, who requested me to employ counsel to appear at the court, as nothing further would be done than an order to prepare an answer, which Mr. Lewis will attend to. I wrote to General Jackson requesting him to engage a suitable character who attended these courts, and forwarded him an official copy of the bill. I have not since heard from him, but suppose he attended to the object. At the same time, it gives me pain that I should be under the necessity of so frequently troubling him. I am very anxious to know the result. Either in my letter from Portland or Boston, I recollect to have addressed you particularly on this subject.

I am exceedingly pleased at finding that you are engaged in such various and active pursuits, and that you will probably be so well recompensed

⁸ KP, XL. 37.

by the result. I have no doubt that with your vigilant and superintending care, your property will rise exceedingly in value, as it has already taken such a start. But it requires a great deal of time and much personal attention to accomplish these objects.

I have no doubt that you might employ very advantageously a more extensive capital, which, actively engaged in a young country, will always turn to profitable account. It would give me extreme pleasure to be able to facilitate your views in obtaining it, but such is the state of monied operations in this city, that there is not the most remote prospect of success.

There never was such a calamitous period as the present. The disappointments that have arisen from the non payment of such immense sums as have been thrown into the market by our great speculators, have occasioned such a stagnation, as was never before experienced. When Greenleaf called his creditors together, he acknowledged that his paper (most of which is now due) amounted to eighteen hundred thousand dollars, and the property he possesses to oppose to these obligations, is of such a nature, as not to be easily converted into active stock, to liquidate the amount.⁹ Many others are in a similar predicament, who were not supposed to be of this class (such as Blair Maclanachan),¹ which, with some unpleasant circumstances that have recently happened, has occasioned a very general want of confidence, and of course, a great scarcity of money.

Immense quantities of land will be brought to the hammer and are now advertised. If they are sold, by purchasers being found who are enabled to pay for them, they will be sacrificed at very low prices.

With all my efforts, I have therefore been disappointed in selling the Kennebec tract, which you are so desirous of disposing of, nor do I see any prospect of succeeding. If Mr. Baring would have taken an interest in it, instead of the upper Million, which depends on eventual arrangements with the State, it would have furnished funds. I have hinted a disposition towards such a exchange, but do not find him disposed to accede to it, even at the price he was to pay for the other, for as no price was mentioned he must naturally have supposed that the sale was to be made on the same terms, which I do not regard, on fair calculation, to be the first cost of the property, for by an account, herewith furnished, you will observe that the disbursements and engagements for these lands amount on

⁹ Though John Greenleaf's actual bankruptcy did not take place until the following year, he was already in serious difficulties. See W. B. Bryan, *History of the National Capital*, I. 297-298.

¹ Blair McClenachan was a wealthy merchant importer of Philadelphia. See J. S. Davis, *Essays*, I. 373.

the 31 December 1796 to the sum of \$501,420, without reckoning any charges attending the management of the property.

This would, on a rough calculation, be near 25 cents per acre. Now the price Mr. Baring is to pay for the upper tract, is $1\frac{1}{6}$ sterling per acre, or 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ cents. Now the difference betwixt these two prices is far less than that which has attended the depreciation of money.

Any real estate, however stationary, in any part of the United States, that has come under my observation, if purchased in the year 1792, would now sell at double the price, arising from the increased quantity of circulating medium. This is not a comfortable reflection, but I believe, on examination, you will find it a just one, and that as far as relates to the Kennebec tract, a loss will be virtually sustained, at the abovementioned price.

I have therefore resolved to try again the European market, and to authorize Sir Francis Baring to make sale of the Kennebec tract, which from the convulsed state of Europe, he may possibly accomplish. With Duers notes due this day and the installment in June, I shall have 50,000 dollars to advance, besides the amount of the settling duties, which Mr. Baring insists upon being paid, in order to procure the remaining deeds that are pledged as security therefor.

With every disposition to oblige you that friendship or my best wishes can induce, I find it entirely out of my power to take up your two notes, of 2,500 dollars each, making 5,000 dollars due on the 15th January, and not as you suppose on the first of that month. I cannot even pay the debts that I owe, not having the means of liquidating a bond which I gave the insurance company for \$20,000, except I have recourse to bank negotiations, to avoid which, considering the dirty insinuations that have been made on the subject, I would sacrifice any property I have, at any price.

With respect to Mr. Baring, I am convinced that it will not be in my power to prevail on him to double his loan. It required a great deal of persuasion on my part, and a full conviction of your punctuality in discharging your obligations, to procure his assent to the measure.

At this period, money has become, both in England and here, far more valuable, and engaged as he is, in more active pursuits than he at that time was, I have no doubt he turns it to much more profitable account. From the conversations I have already had with him, I do not augur much success.

To obtain money, on the credit of one's name, by going into the market amongst the brokers, would induce a most exorbitant interest to be paid, at this time and in this place, which inclines me to think that you had far better negotiate for your supplies at Boston. As for the sale of your

share of the profits, I do not see much chance of your effecting it, as this property has not as yet so favorably impressed the public mind, as to induce an anxiety to possess it.

I think your most eligible mode of raising money would be by a loan procured on the security of your real estate, if it could be effected.

Altho I do not think it could be procured without some difficulty.

Our ladies and all the gentlemen of the party present their sincere compliments to Mrs. Knox and the ladies of your family, in which I with pleasure unite.

Mr. Adams has secured his election, having 71 votes in his favor. Mr. Jefferson will be the vice president. I am with sincerest regard and affection, my dear General

Yours etc.

WM. BINGHAM

General H. Knox

Ross to Cobb, Union River, 29 December 1796 [CP]

Sir:

Union River 29th December 1796

Your favor of the 16th instant came to hand but last post. Having made no communications to the people here, in consequence of your first letter and waiting for an answer to mine, prevents me now from having it in my power to acquaint you particularly of the people's disposition with respect to your proposals. The few that I have communed with on the subject allow the measure to be a reasonable one on the part of the proprietors, but still think it a great grievance to be obliged to give any compensation for the timber; and one of the principal millmen told me (half jest, half garnish [?]) that I had better not attempt paying them a visit this winter in their camps as I might depend on meeting with ill treatment and that binding me fast to a tree I might rely on. I replied that such threats would not intimidate me from fulfilling the duties of the trust I had accepted, and that I was determined to make the triall.

I will endeavour to give you a more satisfactory account by next mail, and will follow your directions with respect to the compensation. This day I mean to notify the inhabitants here of your proposals and determination. I think it will be also necessary to do the same at KilKenny and Hog Bay² and should I meet with tolerable success here, I shall have no objection to taking Hog Bay in with the rest. How soon you can make it convenient to

² There were settlements at Kilkenney Stream, at the head of Kilkenney Cove, in the present town of Hancock, and at Hog Bay, the present village of East Franklin.

visit this part of the country, I shall be very happy. Such fare and accommodations as my habitation affords you may freely command. 'Twill be necessary that you have a plan of the lands in contemplation with you, as it may prevent any disputes that might otherwise occur by interfering with Jarvis or Jones. I wish you many happy returns of the season and am

With much respect sir

Your most obedient servant

DONALD ROSS

Honorable David Cobb, Esquire

And so the year 1796 ended with the hopes of all those concerned in the speculation still undimmed. Though there was, to be sure, little in the way of specific accomplishment to show as yet, at least the two men who must decide future policy had seen their property at first hand and presumably were, as a result, in a better position to act. Now, with the lands paid for, the legal complications of the purchase all but mastered, and the proprietors possessed of specific information, it was reasonable to expect that the program for the improvement and sale of the lands could go forward smartly.

Chapter XII

1797

THE year 1797 was a discouragingly unproductive one in the history of the Bingham speculation in Maine Lands. One might think that once Alexander Baring had come to terms with William Bingham and had actually visited the Maine property, he would be in a position to draw up a systematic program for the development of the lands, and that a campaign to attract settlers and sell them farms could be conducted with vigor and assurance. Bingham was certainly anxious to realize something in return for the huge sums of money which he had already expended on the property, but he was financially dependent upon his partner and was obliged to await the decisions of the young Englishman. Baring was cautious by nature and training; this American venture of his was the first large-scale operation which he had conducted on his own; and he was determined to make further studies of economic conditions in this country before he committed himself. As a result, he spent almost the entire year touring the United States: he visited the South in the spring; later he travelled through western New York to see how land operations were conducted there; and toward the end of the summer he embarked on an expedition to Canada, returning through New Brunswick and Maine so as to get another look at his property. Thus it was not until the very end of the year that he believed himself sufficiently well informed on American land speculation to come to a definite decision on how best to promote his Maine venture. As noted above, the final details of the purchase were not completed until the spring of this year, and Baring may well have been unwilling to make his final study of American lands until he could be certain that all the legal and financial impediments to his acquisition of the Maine property had been removed. Whatever the cause, operations down east languished, and much valuable time was lost.

This delay was particularly galling to General Cobb, who had accepted his agency in the belief that great things were to be done

to develop the Maine speculation, and who was, instead, forced to operate on a shoestring. He was unable to build the roads he wished; nor could he found the "hot-house" settlements which he had planned nor conduct an active campaign to promote sales. His troubles with the lumbermen, who trespassed on the Bingham property almost at will to rob it of valuable timber, were endless; his personal financial problems were a constant source of worry; and above all, he felt himself abandoned by his principals in Philadelphia. He carried out what duties he could with his limited means, but it was not until he was called to Philadelphia in December for a council of war that his prospects seemed once again to brighten. For David Cobb, too, the year was all but wasted.

Finally, the year 1797 marks the beginning of the end of Henry Knox's active participation in the speculation. Though he continued to correspond regularly with Bingham, the theme of almost every letter was his financial troubles. He proved unable to pay back the loan to Baring when it became due, and throughout the year pleaded with Bingham to extricate him from the financial quicksand into which he sank deeper each month. Though he continued to believe, in an almost Micawber-like fashion, that everything would eventually come out all right, his letters detail with monotonous regularity the bankruptcy that was always threatening.¹ General Knox might still be useful to the concern because of his contacts in Massachusetts and Maine and his political influence with the Massachusetts legislature, but beyond that he was a liability to Bingham and Baring rather than an asset and was soon to disappear from their councils almost completely.

Since no important decisions as to the proper methods of developing the Maine Lands were arrived at by the principals, the documents which follow, covering the year 1797, necessarily focus on David Cobb and illuminate the difficulties which a land agent in a new country had to meet—difficulties that were made that much greater by the absence of either specific instructions or adequate financial resources.

¹ The correspondence between Bingham and Knox for the year 1797 can be followed in BP and in KP, XL and XLI.

*Cobb to Bingham, Boston, 30 January 1797 [BP]*²

Gouldsbrough January 30th. 1797

My dear Sir:

Not a line from you—no, not so much as a hearsay of you since the 24th of September last. What am I to conclude from this silence? Certainly nothing but what must encrease my anxiety and distress.

My last two letters were under date the 8th and 13th of December. I sent my son with the last to Boston and to return here as soon as possible with the amount of the bill I then drew upon you for; the severity of the weather was such, that the vessel in which he took passage could only git into Portsmouth, from thence he went by land to Boston where, being detain'd in negotiating the bill much longer than he expected, the vessel returned without him. He came on by land and arrived here last week.³

My lumber arrangements are compleated for the season. What will be the amount, I will not even conjecture, as I was so much deceiv'd on this subject the last year, but of this I am certain, that if it was possible to obtain an honest account of all the lumber cut from the lands, and the proportion to the proprietor as honestly paid, the amount would be equal to any calculations I have ever made. The only mode to insure such returns as are any ways adiquate to the depridations committed, is to be possess'd of the mills that saw the logs thus taken off, or at least the most of them. These mills can be leas'd on very valuable rents and to be kept in repair, and the whole amount of the proportion for the logs secur'd. In any other mode the amount to be receiv'd will not be one fiftieth of the lumber taken; for however you may employ the respectable characters of the country to superintend this business, it is their interest to deceive you, and they will do it. It is farsical to expect honesty from such thieves. They settled here in the first instance upon the sole principle of plunder. The government have heretofore always connived at it, and the inhabitants have practis'd it for such length of time that it has long since ceas'd to be a crime to plunder the forrests of this country—so far from it, that the principle is completely revers'd, and he is the criminal who attempts to prevent it.

If it is yours and Mr. Barings serious intentions to improve and settle this country, you have but one great leading measure to persue in the first instance, and of this Mr. Baring is sufficiently impress'd—that is cutting

² There is an almost identical copy of this letter in CP.

³ There is in CP a manuscript diary which Cobb kept from 1 January 1797 to 19 February of the same year. This diary, which is devoted almost exclusively to remarks on the weather, does mention the few arrivals and departures which did a little to relieve the monotony of the Maine winter. Cobb's anxiety about his son is also duly recorded.

of roads and building houses for entertainment upon them; if this measure is persued with steadiness and spirit, I dare pledge myself you will not want settlers or speculators to purchase your lands. Without it, every other measure will languish. The expence of doing it is certainly trifling when compar'd to the object. The whole amount, for all the roads contemplated (which is one hundred and fifty miles), will not, on the most extravagant calculation, exceed five thousand dollars, including bridges and causeways, and three thousand more for houses and their accommodations, this sum to be expended in the course of two or three years, during which period it is certain, that the income from mills, lumber, prompt payments from settlers and speculators, with the interest arising on their contracts, will far exceed the disbursements that this or any other operation can call for. If we advert to the transactions of others who have undertaken to settle new lands, we shall be convinced that this expence, so far from being extravagant is really paltry. When Gorham and Phelps first began to operate on the Genesee Lands, they were obliged to cut a road from the head of the Mohawk River, or near to it, thro' lands not their own, more than one hundred miles, to come to their purchase, and which cost them above twelve thousand dollars. Williamson did the same to bring him to the roads that lead to Philadelphia, and at much greater expence. Indeed he says that before he sold a single acre of land, he had expended in roads, houses and other improvements ten thousand pounds.⁴ Can it be possible, after such experience and of the profits that have resulted, of which no doubt you are anxious to participate, that you can hesitate one moment about the measures you have to persue?

I cannot omit mentioning another circumstance respecting your Kennebeck lands. Two young men of this neighbourhood call'd upon me last week, who have just returned from visiting some of their friends in that country. They say that the land is much superior to any they have ever seen, and they intend the next summer to sett down upon it as farmers. They cannot be persuaded to remain here, as this country, in their opinion, is far inferior to that for farming. I have no doubt it is equal to any lands in the District of Maine, and must be very valuable. Do not be too anxious to part with this property, if you can avoid it. It will sooner yield you a profit than any of your speculations, and as large. The current of settlement has already reach'd this tract from the south, and has approach'd it very near on the west.

⁴ This is a reference to Charles Williamson, agent for the Pulteney Associates. See P. D. Evans, "The Pulteney Purchase," *New York State Historical Association Quarterly Journal*, 111. 83-104.

Mr. Tillinghast,⁵ the young trader you saw here, is now preparing for building his house; and I have lately been in treaty with the Cape Cod whaleman I mentioned some time since, who went last fall to the bay east of this to reside, to do the same at this place. I have some hope of success with him. I have likewise made an offer to a person who wishes to reside here, that I will build a good house for him on any spot he shall choose, he paying 25 per cent of the cost and mortgaging the property for the payment of the remainder by instalments with interest. I hope this proposal, if it is ever accepted, will not be disagreeable to you. Nothing, in my opinion, should be omitted that can encrease the number of houses and settlers at this port. The excellence of the harbour must make it a place of consequence and value, and some little attention should be paid in bettering its accommodations.

Inclos'd you'll receive a state of the case of the township of Trenton.⁶ I have compos'd it from my recollection, in compliance to the wishes of Mr. Baring when he was here. He will, in reading it, observe that I am no lawyer, but I think he may rely on the facts being justly stated.

I have been so distress'd for some time past by not hearing from you, that I could not compose my mind so far as to give you a letter; and I have now done it only under the hope, that the next mail would afford me relief.

I am, dear sir, with esteem, and with an
affectionate remembrance of Mr. Baring,

Your obedient servant

DAVID COBB

William Bingham, Esquire

Cobb to Thomas Davis, Gouldsborough, 10 February 1797 [CP]

Gouldsboro' February 10th. 1797

My dear Sir:

Some time since I receiv'd your kind favor of the 29th November last, and have delay'd an answer in expectation [of] having it in my power to inform you when I should discharge what is due to the Commonwealth, but I am still unable to do it. I think it extremely unkind in my friends at Philadelphia to neglect me when they know my situation in this business.

⁵ In Cobb's diary for 9 January appears the entry: "*The carpenters began to work for Mr. Tillinghast.*" See above, p. 549, note 3.

⁶ This document, reviewing the history of Trenton from the time of the grant of 1762, is in CP.

It shall be settled before you retire from office.⁷

The plan you propose for ascertaining the settlers on the lands is the only one that can be adopted. I did intend to have mentioned it and to have proposed characters for your consideration in my first letter, but motives of delicacy prevented. For ascertaining the settlers on the contract for six townships, viz., Nos. 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, east of Union River, I would propose General Campbell of the Senate and Judge Sargeant of Sullivan, either of whom are, I believe, personally acquainted with all the settlers on those townships and as they are the only gentlemen of public character we have here, they appear to be pointed out for the purpose.⁸ For the million of acres on the Kennebeck, I know of no character, unless our friend Doctor Coney will undertake it. Altho' he lives at a distance from the tract, perhaps he can mention some person that lives near to or on the land; and for the other million, between the Penobscott and Schudic, John Brewer, Esquire, of Passamaquoddy is better acquainted with the few settlers on it than any other character.

The assessors of the town of Columbia complain that they have receiv'd, for two years past, the Treasurers directions to assess a state tax upon that township. Number 12, which composes one half of this town, was sold to Mr. Bingham under an exemption from state taxes 'till 1801. Whether No. 13, which is the other half of this town, was sold under like conditions I am not able to say, but in either case the government cannot tax this town without a special law for that purpose. The plantations Nos. 8, 9, and 11, east of Union River, are under like exemptions.

I have been told here, sometime since I wrote to you last, that a petition had been signed by a number of our people and sent to Boston, requesting the appointment of Mr. Kidstone,⁹ a trader here, as a justice. I hope it is not true; if it is, I hope that Governor and Council will never notice such proceedings in future. They have in many such instances al-

⁷ This presumably refers to Cobb's purchase of lands on the Androscoggin River. There is a letter from Cobb to Samuel S. Wilde, dated Gouldsborough, 20 February 1797, instructing Wilde on the management of these lands, and a long reply from Wilde dated Warren, 22 March 1797, describing the property, both of which are in CP. Cobb's request for a loan from Bingham was doubtless prompted by a desire to complete the payments to Massachusetts. For Thomas Davis, Treasurer of Massachusetts, see above, p. 273, note 5.

⁸ These gentlemen were Alexander Campbell of Narraguagus (Steuben) and Paul Dudley Sargent. For Campbell, see *Bangor Historical Magazine*, VII. 164-167. For Sargent, see E. W. Sargent, *Epes Sargent of Gloucester and his Descendants*, 213-216.

⁹ Presumably Andrew Kidstone, a recent arrival in Gouldsborough. He is mentioned in Cobb's store account for 1799 printed below, pp. 1001-1009.

ready disgraced the government and this will be an addition to it, if they notice it. Ten gallons of rum will procure signers enough to petitions, if they are to be noticed, to have one half the sotts and villains of the country appointed to office.

I must request a little of your attention to the subject of my son's appointment. Mr. Parker of the Senate may, perhaps give as much information about him as any person and may probably be of some advantage. General Campbell, not knowing that I wish to have my son appointed, will probably advocate the appointment of Kidstone. But partiality aside, he is a very unfit man, unless inebriation is considered a necessary quality for a justice of this country.

Please to remember me affectionately to your brother, the late comptroller, and Mrs. Bradford, and believe me ever your friend

D. COBB

Thomas Davis, Esquire

Treasurer of the Commonwealth

*Cobb to Bingham, Gouldsborough, 10 February 1797 [BP]*¹

My dear Sir:

Gouldsborough February 10th. 1797

I was much pleas'd by yours and Mr. Barings small letters of the 14th January,² which arrived by the last mail—pleas'd, to think that you have not forgot this country and me. But I have my fears, that if any active operations are contemplated, the next season will be partly lost for want of an earlier determination as to the measures to be persued. I know it is a great field and a vast variety of objects that present themselves, which increases the difficulty of making a choice or of knowing where to begin; but in this as in every other situation, where a measure must be gone thro' with, let us begin with the most simple and easy parts of what is to be perform'd, and the rest will follow very naturally of course. But if we never begin, we can never obtain what we wish.

If difficulties occur in systematizing your designed operation here, throw it aside and send me general directions, and if you cannot determine what these should be, send me a chart blanch with full powers for sale of lands, etc., and appropriate a capital of ten thousand dollars for my use, and I will cut roads, build a few little houses, purchase mills, run out the

¹ There is a practically identical copy of this letter in CP.

² Both these short notes are in CP. In them Bingham and Baring speak of their being busy with concern affairs and express their complete approval of what Cobb has done.

lots to settlers in those townships where they are entitled to one hundred acres each, and ascertain such boundaries as are necessary to know where your property is, so as to prevent trespasses thereon; and I am certain before this money is expended, you will see very clearly what further measures may be necessary, and what further advances may be required. But my present opinion is, that you will never have occasion for any further advances but what will be created out of the operations here, and a surplus beside that will be annually increasing to a great amount.

My last letter was of the 30th ultimo. The house wrights I employ'd here the last fall, have been working for Mr. Tillinghast most of the winter, and are now here but will soon be discharged. May I employ them in building a small house for a good shoemaker and his family, who is anxious to reside here, and whose labour we very much want? He pays rent for the house and will purchase it when he is able. The house and shop may cost 250 or 300 dollars. Most of the materials I have by me. It will add one more house and family to our city. If I should proceed in this business, you must not blame me, as I am so pleas'd in obtaining such a character here without the trouble and expence of sending for such a devil.

Please to make my respectfull and affectionate compliments to Mr. Baring, together with an apology for not writing him, and a request that he would accept (with your permission) of this letter as an answer to both, as I am now departing for Union River, to reconcile some differences between my agent and the log stealers there.

I am, dear sir, with esteem your
friend and obedient servant

DAVID COBB

Honorable William Bingham

Ross to Cobb, Union River, 16 February 1797 [CP]

Sir: Union River 16th February 1797

I have just returned from making a short tour thro' the lower part of Trenton towit Jordan's River, the Narrows and Oak Point.³ The inhabitants are in general I find, very industrious in cutting and removing all the timber and wood that is of any value from the proprietors lands while they let their own lie dormant. Upon enquiring by what authority they did so, one said the General told him to cut; another that he meant to

³ Oak Point is at the end of the western peninsula of Trenton, directly across from Bartlett Island.

purchase the land, and a third that he intended to become a settler. Such trifling answers as these I told them would not satisfy you, that you expected to be paid for whatever lumber was cut on your lands, or that otherwise you would commence prosecutions against them. Several of them has lately applied to me on the score of purchasing. I told them my authority did not extend to the sale of any of the lands, but that I would write you on the subject and communicate to them your answer. They wish to know the price you sel [*sic*] it at, what time you'll give them to pay in, and what security you give them of the land. On the other side I have made a schedule of their names with the quantities they wish for, with such remarks as were most obvious to myself on viewing the lands as I passed thro' them. Should your answer be favorable to their request, they wish to have the lotts run out next May or June in which case if you have no predelection for another person, I hope you will give me the employment. Last Saturday two of the young Bartletts were here. They seem anxious to purchase that part of Hog Island, which you own.⁴ They say 'tis about 1300 acres. They requested I would write you on the subject, what you would take for it and how long you would give them to pay in, and to let them know your answer which I promised to do. You will much oblige me by dropping me a line by the next post on the foregoing. And am

With much respect

Sir your most obedient servant

DONALD ROSS

Honorable David Cobb, Esquire

*Contract for the Construction of a Mill, Gouldsborough,
3 March 1797⁵ [CP]*

This agreement made this third day of March in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and ninety seven by and between Noah Hall Esquire and Elisha Goodwin Yeoman,⁶ both of Gouldsborough in Coun-

⁴ There is a Hog Island in Flanders Bay, off the present West Gouldsborough.

⁵ This document is included both as an example of the type of agreement Cobb made with local workmen and as a description of a Maine sawmill of the 1790's.

⁶ Colonel Noah Hall was the father of Thomas Cobb's wife, Abigail Hall. He, with his daughter and son-in-law, had accompanied Cobb to Gouldsborough in 1795. See *Bangor Historical Magazine*, IV. 73. Colonel Hall is mentioned frequently in Cobb's diary for 1795 and 1796.

Elisha Goodwin was later to be one of the first settlers of Mariaville. Presumably he was induced to go there by Cobb, who was trying to establish a settlement in that town. See A. J. Coolidge and J. B. Mansfield, *History and Description of New England, Maine*, 206.

ty of Hancock and Commonwealth of Massachusetts, jointly and severally on the one part, and David Cobb of said Gouldsbrough Esquire on the other part, witnesseth: That whereas, for the consideration herein after mentioned, the said Hall and Goodwin have this day agreed with the said Cobb to build for him a good new saw mill and mill dam on the place where the old saw mill so called on the western stream now stands; and of the following dimensions, viz., sixty two feet in length and twenty feet wide, to be boarded and secured on the roff from leaking, with compleat running-gear made of the best seasoned white oak or hard wood of the country; with Negro and Drawup wheels⁷ and every kind of iron-work and saw compleat for such a mill, excepting the drawup and other chains. The mill frame and dam to be made of the strongest and best timber and plank. And the whole to be finished in a workman like manner and of the best materials throughout, and to be compleated fit for use by the first day of October next.

Now in consideration of the premises, the said Cobb hereby agrees with the said Hall and Goodwin that they shall have the old mill as it now is with all the materials belonging to it and four hundred dollars in cash; to be paid to them on the completion of the mill and dam on the said first day of October next, and as in full satisfaction for the services thus to be performed.

In witness whereof we have hereunto, interchangeably, sett our hands and seals the day and year above-mentioned.

Sign'd sealed and deliver'd in the presence of

Joseph Hopkins

Thomas Cobb

Noah Hall [SEAL]

Elisha Goodwin [SEAL]

David Cobb [SEAL]

Bingham to Cobb, Philadelphia, 7 March 1797 [CP]

Philadelphia March 7th 1797

Dear General:

Your two letters of the 30th January and 10th February have duly arrived, and by the same mail. A continued scene of business in which Mr.

⁷ In modern sawmills, a "nigger" is a device which holds the log in place while it is being sawed. Presumably this is the piece of equipment Cobb is referring to. The draw-up chains and wheels pull the log up to where the "nigger" can hold it. I want to thank Mrs. J. Watson Webb of the Shelburne Museum, Shelburne, Vermont, for supplying me with this information.

Baring was engaged, previous to his departure for Charleston (from whence he will return in May) prevented his attention to that systematic plan of arrangement, for the improvement of the Maine settlement, which we have uniformly deemed so requisite. I only waited for his ideas, in order to methodize the business and communicate to you the result. My avocations for some time past have called on an unusual portion of my attention, having been placed in the chair of the Senate, after Mr. Adams's retirement, and the Session of the Day has commenced early and terminated late, in order to expedite the public business, previous to our adjournment.

I observe by the circuitous mode of procuring the proceeds of the bill you negotiated on me, that not only much trouble, but considerable expence will attend the operation. I cannot account for such difficulties, as money has been much wanted to the southward and the greatest ease has attended the sale of drafts on Philadelphia from Boston. The commission, too, is exorbitant—from one half to one per cent is the highest ever known on the negotiation of an inland bill.⁸

I see with pleasure that you are continuing (with a probability of success) your efforts to arrest the progress of log cutting, or to bring under contribution those who are guilty of these illicit practices. There is no such effectual mode of reforming these rascals as by changing their habits and diverting their attention to agricultural pursuits.

I fully concur with you in opinion of the efficacy of roads in promoting population and improvement, in every new settlement. There can be but one opinion on this subject.

But there are various points of consideration to be taken into account, with respect to the particular time of effecting this operation, and the direction that it will be most proper that the roads shall take. Labor was so extravagantly high, when I was in your country, that it did not appear advisable, at such a period, to incounter the expence, and there appeared a difficulty in engaging people who would undertake it by contract and at stipulated prices. I wish to give a decided preference to this mode, as not only the most effectual one to prevent fraud and imposition, but the most certain, as it relates to oeconomy. Indeed, I would be desirous of embracing an additional modification in this business, which is, to contract for the payment of a certain portion of the demands of the undertakers, in lands, on terms to be specified. If by these means, the contractors would eventually become settlers, there would be a great point gained in favor of the proprietors, and a higher price could with propriety be given. The

⁸ For this draft, see above, p. 823. The draft itself, dated 13 December 1796, is in BP.

roads already opened appear to have been effected at considerable expence.

With respect to the direction of the roads, and where the operation shall commence, it is a matter involved in much uncertainty; and from a survey of the country, and from a probability of the course that population will be most promoted by giving a preference we are as yet undecided.

There is one position, founded on just principles—that where there are lands situate on navigable waters, they ought to be surveyed in convenient tracts and offered for sale and settlement, for the rivers and streams are natural roads, that open a communication of neighbourhood and facilitate the conveyance of produce from one place to another, in order to satisfy the reciprocal wants of the settlers. I therefore think that those townships situate on rivers, should obtain a preference in our views of settlement. There is a great body of land in this predicament, which I think it would be expedient to prepare for settlers, by the necessary surveys. Mill seats always abound on these waters, which are very essential, and if grist mills were to be built, in any situation where there could be an export of flour, I would recommend some burr stones. Indeed, it would be well enough, if the expence was too great for the owners, that the proprietors should make the advance that would be necessary to purchase them, which I would willingly agree to do.

I wish you would communicate your opinions on the subject of the most eligible direction for the roads you contemplate, and in what manner and at what expence you expect to be able to accomplish the object. We are extremely anxious that every thing should be done, that will contribute to the aggrandizement of this property. The situation, from vicinity to the sea and large navigable rivers, renders it very accessible to emigrants, and if an interior communication was made, it would enjoy every possible advantage, and the sooner it commences, the better. But attention must be paid to the price of labor, when the work is to be compleated.

I think the most oeconomical mode of furnishing you with funds will be by having them carried to your credit on the books of the Branch Bank, where you may draw for them at your leisure and convenience.

It may be prudent to make some advances for the accommodation of the first settlers; but it appears, that this arrangement might involve, if carried to any extent, a very considerable expence and might furnish a precedent, which may be expected to be followed, in cases of all new settlers in the town.

The harbor of this town is excellent, but to attract settlers, there must be a well cultivated surrounding country, in order to supply the wants of those who reside in the town. Unfortunately, the district in the neighbour-

hood of Gouldsborough, is not the most attractive, from fertility of soil.

I hope that no operations that we meditated for the settlement of these lands will be suspended on account of your not having heard more particularly from Mr. Baring and myself. You certainly are authorized to sell, and I suppose you are making every effort to increase the number of inhabitants on the township which was surveyed last year, for where a settlement is commenced, the greatest exertion should be made to extend it.

You will please to inform me what sum will be wanting for your immediate operations, and I will provide it, in the manner I before mentioned.

Mr. Baring and myself have agreed to advance the three thousand dollars, which are wanted for your personal convenience, on the terms you mentioned. It shall be remitted to you, or you may draw for it.

I do not find that any mode has been adopted to determine the number of settlers on the tract, untill which, the deeds for one half of the land remain lodged in escrow. I wish this matter to be arranged as speedily as possible.

The immense demands for money, arising principally from the disappointments of the merchants and detention of their property,⁹ have thrown me into considerable difficulties, which have prevented my offer to accommodate you sooner.

I will write to you again in a short time. In the mean while, I request you to be as particular as possible with respect to all the objects that is natural we should wish to be informed about.

I am with sincere regard
dear General

Your obedient humble servant

WM. BINGHAM

General Cobb

Ross to Cobb, Union River, 16 March 1797 [CP]

Sir:

Union River 16th March 1797

Am exceedingly sorry to find by your favor of the 11th that the lumbago prevents us the pleasure of seeing you at Union River. I hope, however, you are by this time so far recovered as to be able to undertake such a journey when you find it convenient otherwise.

⁹ This was the period when the French were seizing large numbers of American vessels in French ports.

I will pay attention to your orders respecting Smith's lott; you may probably have applications similar to his from several others from this quarter. I do not pretend to direct, but I could wish you to defer giving them a final answer, till your arrival here. There are discriminations that am fully confident you would wish to make, when you know there are reasons existing that would dictate such a conduct. Those particularly who have been in the habit of transgressing, who still persist in it, who are very officious in confirming others in the same habits, who despise and set at defiance all laws, and who now have recourse to any shift to evade them, and who would be desperate enough even to resist them openly—such people I presume you would not be willing to indulge *to their hurt*.

I have given permission to several people to cutt wood and timber in Trenton; for the wood they are to pay two shillings per cord, for what is handy; what is not, they are to pay one shilling and sixpence; for timber, one eighth part of the value, payable in cash before shipping.

I should wish to have previous notice of your visit to this place, that I may be at home. Saturday I go to Captain Hull's¹ and dont expect to return before the Saturday thereafter. However, if you could take the Mount² in your route any time next week, I would proceed with you this way.

I am with much respect Sir

Your most obedient servant

DONALD ROSS

Honorable David Cobb, Esquire

*Cobb to Bingham, Gouldsborough, 9 April 1797 [BP]*³

Gouldsborough April 9th. 1797

My dear Sir:

On the 1st. instant I receiv'd your letter of the 7th of March. I am exceedingly obliged by the loan that you and Mr. Baring have been so kind as to indulge me with. My embarrassments for the want of it have been great, and I have been too much distressed by them.

Since my last of the 10th of February I have been with the inhabitants of Union River and of the towns of Trenton and Eden (Mount Desert). In this last mentioned town they are rapidly advancing to order and agricultural improvements. I have engaged six farms to the young fellows of this island, who would have paid me part of the purchase money in hand, but not having a power to give deeds (the power I have for this purpose

¹ This was Samuel Hull, for whom the present Hull's Cove on Mt. Desert was named. See G. E. Street, *Mount Desert*, 164.

² Mount Desert.

³ There is an almost identical copy of this letter in CP.

expir'd on the 1st. of November last) I refused it; but I put three of them into possession of the land they intend purchasing. I was told of others, who are now absent, that wanted lands upon this island. Trenton is the best township of land, on the shore, in this country, but there is yet too much good timber on it to admit of the inhabitants doing much in agriculture. Jackson's deed to Le Roche contains a valuable part of it, and you would do well to repurchase it, as well as the part of No. 8 that was convey'd. The Trenton part, as being on the shore, is at present the most valuable, but the soil of both is very fine and good. The objection you heretofore made, that the title to this land was disputable, can be of no force in your repurchasing it, as Jackson gave a deed of it to Le Roche with warrantee. Colonel Jones has 6,000 acres in this town and I believe would sell, as he is pushed. He has offer'd it, but as I told him you did not intend to make any further purchases, no price was mentioned. He holds these lands high and his price would probably be too much unless his wants are very great. He sold last year for $2\frac{1}{2}$ dollars per acre. The inhabitants of these towns were very particular in their enquiries about their public lots as they want them laid out so as to make such improvements upon them as will facilitate the settlement of a minister and the keeping of schools. In De Gregoire's deed to Jackson no reservations are made for this purpose excepting on Mount Desert, where Jackson has given 450 acres for the use of the town. I have never seen De Gregoire's grant from the Commonwealth, but I presume that if these reservations are not particularly mentioned, they are implied by some expressions in it, as I never knew an instance of any grant or sale of land by the government without them. I shall have a copy of this grant in a few days, and if it appears that these reservations were made, what measures shall I persue to obtain redress? De Gregoire has a little property still left on Mount Desert, unless lately disposed of.

The roads that I contemplated opening are those I mentioned to you the first year I came here, that is, from the Narrows on Penobscot River (between Frankfort and No. 1 or Buckston) in a direct route to Machias; from the head of the tide on the same river to the Schoodic; and from Gouldsboro' northeasterly to the townships in the Northern Division. This last road will pass thro' a part of No. 17,⁴ where the settlements are to commence this spring. These three great roads will open the country thoro'ly to the view of all who may wish to purchase or settle in it. The mode of doing this business I intended should be on contract by the people of the western part of Massachusetts, especially from the county of

⁴ The present town of Deblois.

Hampshire, many of whom intend to settle in this country, as some of their friends have already done on Penobscot River. The expence of it, taking into view the number of rivers and small streams that must have bridges and extensive causeways for the low lands, I have estimated at 30 dollars per mile, which for 150 miles, the distance I expect these roads will run, amounts to 4,500 dollars—say the round sum of 5,000 dollars. This, I imagine, will be the ultimate expence at the present price of labour, but the great change that must soon take place in the business of the United States will then give you a much better view of this subject.

However just your observations are respecting rivers being the natural roads of a country and affording great facility of intercourse to the first settlers of it, yet I think there ought to be a caution in giving townships thus situated a preference for settlement to those on artificial roads. The farmer who setts down on a river in this country turns as naturally to a log stealer as the civiliz'd man does to a savage, and a thousand such settlers will give us no more value to the soil than so many Indians residing upon it, but he who settles upon a road and cannot with ease convey his lumber to markett, will cultivate the soil and give substantial value to the country he resides in. These reasons have operated with me to persuade two of the settlers that are going on No. 17 to take their lots two miles from the river, that they might not be in the way of being tempted to turn lumber men, and thence be a curse to the country and themselves.

In a former letter I inform'd you that I had open'd a correspondence with the Treasurer of the Commonwealth on the subject of the settlers, and the business is now so far advanced that I daily expect his answer approving the men, whom, at his request, I had mentioned as proper persons to ascertain and report the number of settlers on the lands. This business is now in such progress as will soon determine it.⁵

I am much pleas'd with the mode you have adopted for supplying me with funds in future. It is the best, and only one that will not subject you to certain loss. The last bill I drew upon you cost 5 per cent for negotiation at Boston. Whatever the cause may [be], southern bills at Boston are generally, and have been for years past, from 2 to 5 per cent below par.

I am unable to say what sum of money I shall require in the course of this season; perhaps two or three thousand dollars will be sufficient, unless I should make purchases of mills that may be conveniently situated. But in that case I can give you timely notice so as to place in the bank whatever further sums may be wanted.

⁵ There is a letter in CP from Thomas Davis to Cobb dated Boston, 14 March 1797, approving Cobb's plans for the enumeration and his nominees to do the enumerating.

The power you gave me for the sale of land expir'd last November, since which I have had no authority for this purpose. I inform'd you of this event in my letter of October last, but thro' the variety of your avocations it seems you have forgot it. This power should be renew'd as soon as possible, for I contemplate a period not far distant when, by this and other resources I have here, my wants will be compleatly supplied for all your design'd operations in this country.

I intended to have made up my accounts to the first of March and transmitted them to you, but upon reflecting that my year commences on the first of May I have tho't it best to omit it 'till then, and from thence transmit them half yearly afterwards.

Next week I shall attend the Court of Common Pleas that settts at Penobscot, where I have promis'd some settlers on No. 9 in Taunton Bay who have a dispute with an inhabitant of Sullivan about a piece of marsh that belongs to neither, that I would adjust their differences; from thence I intend going to Boston to settle my concerns there by means of the loan you have kindly afforded me, and when there, if I do not meet with Mr. Parsons,⁶ who has the contract for Leonard's township, I shall visit him at Northampton that I may know what his intentions are respecting it. From thence, I shall return here. If you should have any letters for me that can come to Boston before the 20th of May, you will please to direct to me there. You may expect to hear from me at Boston or Northampton or both.

I am dear sir
with much esteem
your obliged humble servant
DAVID COBB

*Cobb to Bingham, Boston, 9 May 1797 [BP]*⁷

My dear Sir:

Boston May 9th. 1797

I arrived here the 4th instant after more than a fortnights absence from Gouldsboro'; one half of which was occupied in visiting Mount Desert, Trenton and Penobscott. I have seen the grant to DeGregoire from the Commonwealth, and there is no reservations made of lands for public uses for either of the townships in that grant. This is unfortunate as it respects the inhabitants, and will be some check to the settlement of the towns.

⁶ For Parsons, see above, p. 822, note 5.

⁷ There is an almost identical copy of this letter in CP.

May I be permitted to give the town of Trenton the same quantity of land for public uses that General Jackson reserved for the town of Eden on Mt. Desert, i.e., 450 acres?

Before I came from Gouldsboro', I convers'd with Colonel Jones about his 6,000 acres of land in Trenton. He will take a dollar per acre, two thousand paid down, the remainder in one and two years with interest. This price is certainly low, and I presume he never would have made the offer but from extreme necessity. This purchase is worth making. If you have any inclination for it, you will inform me by the first post, as I have some fears of its passing into other hands. It is possible that these lands may be obtain'd a little lower by the temptation of money in hand, as I know Jones to be heavily *push'd*.

By this post I shall draw upon you, at ten days sight, for the three thousand dollars you have permitted me to receive on loan. If in the closure of my affairs here I should require five hundred dollars more, which will make the sum I requested of you, you must permit me to draw for it. If I can possibly do without it, you shall not be troubled with it.

The Treasurer has agreed that the gentlemen I nominated should make the return of the number of inhabitants now on the lands. They will attend to this business immediately on my return, which will be by the 30th instant. The expence must be yours.

I shall visit Northampton before I go east.

I am dear sir, with esteem, your
obedient and much obliged servant
DAVID COBB

William Bingham, Esquire

Baring to Cobb, Philadelphia, 13 June 1797 [CP]

Dear Sir:

Philadelphia 13 June 97

I have been wandering about so much lately through the southern states that I have not been able to write you as I intended on the subject of our Maine Lands. The few days I spend here are also so taken up that I must leave the business to Mr. Bingham, who has promised immediate attention to it. I set off tomorrow with Mr. Hope⁸ for Canada through New

⁸ This was Henry Philip Hope, a first cousin once removed of Henry Hope. A sleeping partner in Hope and Company, he preferred collecting works of art and precious stones to a business career. His most famous acquisition was the Hope Diamond. See H. W. and I. Law, *Book of the Beresford Hopes*, 69-72, 113-115. There is a charm-

York and the Genisee. We shall descend the St. Lawrence to Quebec and from there proceed through New Brunswick to St. Johns and St. Andrews to Maine. From the information I last year collected I believe this route to be very practicable. We shall certainly find you at Gouldsboro' the beginning of August. As we are not known in the backwoods you would oblige me to write a line to Brewer and to Judge Jones in our favor—we may perhaps want to borrow horses and I wish the people to be persuaded we shall not *run away* with them. We shall call at St. Andrews where you can drop me a letter if you please, at Mr. Pagans.⁹ I shall certainly call there. Mr. Bingham will write you in reply to the several enquiries you make and I am very glad to hear so good an account of our property and such pleasing prospects of its future importance. I am convinced it requires nothing but active management and some expence in improvements. For the former we trust to you and we shall be ready with regard to the latter to any proper extent. I am not sufficiently stationary to take upon me any detailed explanations but must for the present leave them to Mr. Bingham. I shall only say that I particularly recommend the immediate opening the roads as a necessary preliminary to every improvement, and on my arrival with you we will discuss together the policy of making purchases from our neighbors, some of which may be usefull to us. I am in hopes this will find you at Boston and if it does, I request you will defer your return to Maine a few days untill you hear from me again. I intend sending from New York the deeds from Mr. Bingham to me to you, and beg you will have them recorded in due form in the respective counties, taking great care of them. You may keep them untill my arrival or if you or your son should be going to Boston previous thereto, they may be left under a cover for me with John Codman. If you should be returned to Maine, I must contrive some means of sending them to you and

ing portrait of Henry Philip Hope, attired in some kind of oriental costume, in *ibid.* facing page 114.

Henry Philip Hope had arrived in New York in November, 1796, where he had been met by Baring, who wrote of Hope's proposed stay in America: "This is not a country to afford great luxuries and enjoyments for young men, but I am sure he will very shortly perceive that though the curiosities of Rome are not to be found in it, nor the refinements of London or Paris, that it offers a curiosity of a larger and more gratifying import of a rising country, a spectacle the most grateful to a liberal mind and the most instructive whether considered with the eye of the philosopher, the politician, or the merchant." See Baring to Henry Hope, 29 November 1796 in BaP.

⁹ This was Robert Pagan, one of the leading citizens of St. Andrews. See H. S. Burage, *Maine in the Northeastern Boundary Controversy*, 31, 55–58. It was during this summer that Pagan discovered the evidence which identified the Schoodic as the true St. Croix.

I beg you will take particular care that due formality is observed. I am ever with sincere respect and regard, dear sir

Your sincerely obedient servant

ALEXR. BARING

General Cobb

Baring to Cobb, New York, 17 June 1797 [CP]

Dear Sir:

New York 17 June 1797

I wrote you a few days past from Philadelphia to request, if you were still at Boston, that you would wait to receive some deeds I intended sending you to have recorded in Maine. On reflection I request you will not wait any longer as Mr. Bingham and myself have resolved to send them to General Knox at Boston who will transmit them to you at Gouldsboro'. There are three different original deeds and three exact copies. The deeds are to be recorded in the counties with the utmost form and I wish to have certificates added to the copies that they are correct copies of the deeds so recorded which my lawyer tells me can only be effectually done in the recording offices of the county. To the deed of Gouldsboro' town is annexed a map and to aid the recording this deed I have ordered a copy of the map to be made and sent you, as I believe it must be inserted in the books. I must request your very particular attention to this business which is of importance and you will please to keep both the deeds and copies until I call on you in Maine.

When I left Philadelphia, which was two days past, the documents were not perfectly ready and I rather think Mr. Bingham will send them by some returning member when Congress breaks up. I find by a letter from Mr. Codman of the 5th instant that you were then in Boston, which leads me to presume my letters may reach you there. We shall set off from here in two days on our intended tour and hope to meet you in Maine early in August. I am ever my dear sir

Your sincerely obedient servant

ALEXR. BARING

Cobb to Bingham, Boston, 2 July 1797 [BP]¹

My dear Sir:

Boston July 2d. 1797

Some unforeseen circumstances in the arrangement of my private concerns have detained me here a month longer than I had any idea of when

¹ There is an almost identical copy of this letter in CP.

I left Gouldsboro'. They are now adjusted, and I shall depart for Maine on the 4th. But it is distressing to me that I have to return without your power for the sale of land. My operations depend so much on this that I shall be embarrassed exceedingly. Why it has been omitted I cannot conceive.

I shall be under the necessity of drawing upon you for one thousand dollars before I leave this place, five hundred of which I consider as on my own account and as in part of my annual stipend. The remainder will be accounted for in my operations of the ensuing six months. I must depend on your kindness in honoring this bill. It will be drawn in favour of our friend Jackson and at ten days sight.

In my visit to Northampton and other places in the county of Hampshire, I call'd upon some of those persons who were last year so anxious for a concern in Maine. They still wish it, but it is evident that the failure of the Georgia madness has damp'd the ardor for land speculations in that county. The tide of emigration, however, has certainly changed, and the reputation of Eastern Lands stands high in the opinion of the people there. Some families have remov'd this spring to Penobscot River.

Parsons who has a contract for one of our townships, cannot pay any thing at present; I told him it was not our wish to injure him in any respect, but on the contrary to give him every indulgence that was consistent with the security of the property, but that he ought remember that this indulgence would always be in proportion to his exertions in bringing forward the settlement of the country. He will be at Gouldsboro' in the course of the summer. The price of labour is still too high for to venture on any important operations in our country, either by contract or otherwise.

It is unfortunate that Mr. Barings deeds etc. were not forwarded before his departure for Canada, as it is probable, thro the conveyance of General Knox, they will not reach Gouldsboro' much before Barings arrival there.

I am dear sir, with esteem
and respect, your obedient servant
DAVID COBB

*Bingham to Knox, Philadelphia, 10 July 1797 [KP]*²

My dear General:

Philadelphia July 10th 1797

I observe in your last letter that it was your intention to pass the re-

² KP, XL. 157.

mainder of the season at St. Georges, where I suppose, from your long absence, you will be very busily engaged on your arrival.

Mr. Baring intends to make you a visit, after having, in company with Mr. Hope, passed some time at Gouldsbrough.

By letters recently received from his father, I find that both he and Mr. Hope continue to be much gratified with the acquisition of the property, in which they are very desirous of making the most rapid settlements in order to turn it to prompt and advantageous account. According to their views, I can very evidently discover that great expenditures will be made, before there is any prospect of reimbursement. I believe this plan to be the most effectual, as relative to eventual profit, but not the most accommodating to those who, pressed by difficulties, have occasion for an immediate supply of active capital.

If the lower tract should not be productive for a considerable period, it becomes more expedient to draw resources from the Kennebeck lands. I have therefore written to Sir Francis Baring and urged him to a sale of this property, which I think the present convulsed appearances in Europe offer a very favorable moment of affecting. I wish you, if the occasion should present, to impress Mr. Baring with suitable opinions on the subject of this tract, which, by Mr. Morris's misrepresentations, has been very much undervalued in the public estimation. Like a woman, who has lost her reputation, it is almost impossible to recover it.

It is curious to observe what a change has been worked in the public mind, within a few years, relative to lands. The success of a few induced the many to engage deeply in them. The sufferings of some, who may attribute their misfortunes to excessive speculation in lands have cast a gloom over the business, and every body is indisposed to adventure in this species of property. I am convinced that Europe is our only market, and I shall therefore make every active exertion to insure success in that quarter.

I should be exceedingly embarrassed if another payment should fall due without deriving any additional pecuniary resources from this property. If a good sale could be effected, we should be placed in an easy agreeable situation, and wait without impatience for the sure tho slow profits arising from the improvement and settlement of the lower tract.

Congress has been for some time past attempting to unravel a plot, in which General Blount is a principal agent, whose guilt has appeared so evident, from incontrovertible testimony, that he has been expelled the Senate.

It rather appears that the principal inducement to project the plan was to operate on the fears of the Spanish minister and, by bringing Blounts

influence with the Creeks and Cherokees to market, procure an immense gratification from the Spaniard, for detaching these tribes from the British interests, and engaging them in favor of Spain. For the object was an expedition on the part of the British, against the Floridas, the troops to march thro the territories of the United States, from Canada upper.

I am rather inclined to believe that the discovery of this plan (to which the British seemed to have turned a deaf ear) was made to the Spaniard, by Blount himself, and of course much magnified, with regard to its aspect and consequences.

The communications of the Spaniard to the governor of the Floridas have so alarmed him, that he refuses to deliver up the posts on the Mississippi and is making the most serious preparations for a vigorous defence.

We shall probably soon find the clue that will direct our search into much of the business, that is at present involved in mystery, as a committee of the House is now engaged in a severe examination, with a view of supporting a number of Articles of Impeachment.³

With sincere and respectfull compliments to your ladies, believe me to be with the truest regard

my dear General

Yours etc.

WM. BINGHAM

Bingham to Cobb, Lansdowne, 21 July 1797 [CP]

Lansdowne July 21 1797

Dear General:

Your letter of the 2d instant from Boston was received, after a long interval of absence, arising I suppose from the unexpected detention you were exposed to in settling your concerns at Taunton.

The neglect in sending you the power to sell the lands was an omission which can not be attended with serious consequences, as you can engage to furnish good and sufficient titles within a limited period. The error cannot be rectified, until Mr. Baring's arrival, as he must join in the same.

Your draft for a thousand dollars has appeared and been duly accepted. I wish you could have confined your demand to a smaller sum, as the difficulty of procuring money has amazingly increased, and I am fearfull that we shall have but slow returns from the sales in the district.

I do not think it a misfortune that the rage for speculating in lands has

³ For the Blount Conspiracy, see F. J. Turner, "Documents on the Blount Conspiracy," *American Historical Review*, x. 574-606 and also 273-274.

ceased, especially as relative to that class of characters who purchased on credit in large quantities, with a view of selling for a profit, and who had not the means of fulfilling their engagements, if they were disappointed in such views. Such persons have been a curse to the country. They have not only injured its reputation by their fraudulent conduct, but have reduced thousands to misery, who had an illplaced confidence in them. I hope that those who wished to purchase townships in our district were not of that class. If they were, it is perhaps fortunate that they have declined fulfilling their obligations.

I observe that the price of labor is too high to venture on any important operations.

This evil I think must be soon corrected, as the recent distress of the country, by rendering money less abundant, will naturally reduce labor to its proper level. The immensity of the circulating medium, far beyond what the wants of society required, has been the instrumental cause of the unnatural state of things. However, I do not suppose that labor alone will be affected by the plenty of money. It ought to have an influence on the price of lands, in which case, arrangements might be made, from which no disadvantages would result, for lands at their increased value might be given in exchange for labor.

As an effectual remedy for the complaint, it will be necessary that the population of the District should greatly increase, for labor must always bear a certain proportion to the demand for it, and the numbers to supply that demand. It therefore gives me pleasure to find that the tide of emigration has changed and the current setting towards the Eastern Lands. I wish you had informed me whether this observation was the result of your own reflections, on viewing the increased settlements of the country, or the opinion of those who reside in those districts of Massachusetts from whence the emigration flows.

The public sales of the lands on the borders of the Penobscot, if purchased in small quantities by settlers, will have a very auspicious effect, as relative to increase of population. The lands are excellent in quality, and the advantages are incalculable, with respect to local position, from living on the borders of such a navigable stream. I therefore suppose that settlements will progress in this situation with great rapidity, from which, we shall derive an advantage tantamount to an occupancy of our own lands, as this is the natural door of admission into our district.

Mr. Baring and myself had serious intentions at one time of purchasing one of these townships, but on reflection, I can observe no great advantage would result from it, as their improvement would be equally advanta-

geous, whether resulting from our own efforts or the exertions of others.

Leonard Jarvis made a visit to Philadelphia recently and offered me a tract of land lying betwixt the township of Orrington and our western boundary, containing in estimation, about 50,000 acres.⁴ His price was two dollars per acre. He did not even hint that he would take a lower price. I had no inclination to purchase. But at the same time was not displeased to find, that lands in that quarter were held in such high estimation. For the quality of the soil and the advantages of local situation, he referred to you.

I find that there is little doubt entertained of the District of Maine becoming an independent state, within a short period, as the result of the late appeal to the opinions of the inhabitants was in favor of this measure.⁵

I wish to know your sentiments on this subject, in relation to the advantages we shall derive in our prospects of improvement and settlement, by the establishment of this new order of things. The country will certainly, in consequence thereof, be held up in a more prominent point of view, and every encouragement be given it, that can be derived from legislative aid and protection, supported by municipal institutions.

There will be a contribution levied for the expences of government, but where such oeconomical habits prevail, it can be but trifling, and not to be contemplated as an objection, considering the catalogue of benefits connected with the new arrangement.

I observe you make no mention of the present state of Van Berkel's suit. He filed a bill in chancery, and when the court met, he had no person to appear to support it. He was therefore nonsuited. Whether he has renewed the action again, or in what situation the business is at present placed, I cannot learn.

This business is certainly under your immediate care, as the lands which are the object of contest lay within the boundaries of the tract, which is committed to your superintendence.

As regular posts are established within the District, advices can easily be obtained from the council employed, with respect to the situation of this suit, as well as from General Knox, who is somewhat acquainted with the business.

You do not mention what progress you have made in ascertaining the numbers of settlers on the different tracts, so as to constitute a claim on

⁴ This tract included a good part of present-day Ellsworth.

⁵ For the petitions and vote in this abortive separatist movement, see E. Stanwood, "The Separation of Maine from Massachusetts," *Proc. Mass. Hist. Soc.*, xli. 138. The record is apparently not clear as to how the vote went.

the State for a deduction to the extent thereof. It is of essential consequence that the persons employed should be characters that will give themselves that degree of trouble which an attention to such business will naturally involve. Every omission of an individual who may be classed as a settler induces an absolute payment (and consequently loss) of thirty dollars, which renders it necessary that those who undertake it should be impressed with the importance of their mission as affecting our interests.

You do not acknowledge the receipt of a letter I wrote you some time since—rather a lengthy one.

I wish you would find it convenient to write to me at least every fortnight, however inactive may be your operations, as I wish to be enabled to forward copies of your letters to the gentlemen in England who are connected with this business.

If a general peace should be the result of the present European negotiations, there will be no part of the United States that will so essentially benefit therefrom as the District of Maine. The reinstatement of the French West India colonies will require an immense supply of lumber of all kinds, as well as live stock, and I have no doubt that many valuable contracts may be made for furnishing these essential articles.

Perhaps it might prove advantageous for the proprietors of the lands to purchase the mill seats, at a time when lumber is of little value and, consequently the mills proportionably low, by which means they would possess a monopoly of the lumber, or at least, so far as the exclusive possession of this property might be deemed such.

I shall probably send you an order to be executed for a quantity of small scantling etc., for the accommodation of the farm I have purchased in the neighbourhood of this city.

Have you any lumber that will answer to make posts, and which will remain sound for any length of time?

With my best compliments to the ladies of your family and your son, believe me to be with sincerity and regard, dear General

Yours etc.

WM. BINGHAM

General Cobb

P.S. Please deliver the inclosed to Mr. Baring.

Cobb to Baring, Gouldsborough, 26 July 1797 [CP]

Gouldsboro' July 26th 1797

My dear Sir:

Your two letters of the 13th and 17th of June, from Philadelphia and

New York, I receiv'd at Boston where I was detain'd a month longer than I expected in adjusting some private concerns, and came from thence the 5th instant, without receiving a line from Mr. Bingham since I went from this place in April last.

I am very happy to hear of your intended visit to Maine, and I think you must be pleased with your tour thro' Canada. Your road from Quebec to St. John's will, I conceive, be much like the one you passed the last year from Machias here—not a bad one for soldiers. But from St. Andrews, I hope your and your friends anticipations of the welcome you will receive at the little hutt in Gouldsboro' will smooth some of the ruggedness of the roads. The rest, if you please, after your arrival, you may forgit by a few bottles of champagne that are still left.

The Messrs. Pagan's, whom I have informed of your intention to pass thro' St. Andrews, will deliver you this. Mr. Brewer and Judge Jones are likewise requested to afford you every assistance their country admits of. You have my best wishes that you may arrive in safety.

I am, dear sir, with esteem (and with my very respectfull compliments to your friend Mr. Hope) your friend and obedient servant

D.C.

Alexander Baring, Esquire

Bingham to Cobb, Philadelphia, 27 July 1797 [CP]

Philadelphia July 27. 1797

Dear General:

I wrote to you some days ago, and omitted to mention to you that you have forgot to forward to me the deeds, conveyances, etc., that were delivered to you to be recorded.

It is essentially necessary that such important papers should be collected together, and deposited safely, and you will oblige me by committing them to the care of some person, in whom you can confide for the safe delivery of them. The want of them prevents me being enabled to make up an account of some consequence.

You promised to give me ample information relative to the recent purchases made of Shaw by General Jackson, in which there appeared considerable deception and which occasioned me to write to General Jackson to request that he would make no further payments untill there was an eclarcissement on the subject.

It is impossible for me, at this distance to elucidate these points, nor is it agreeable to make payments under the impression that I am imposed upon

especially as I am acting for others who are concerned in the result, and to whom I am accountable.

You will excuse my mentioning these points so frequently to you, but the necessity as well as inclination to be regular and to introduce order into my arrangements must apologize to you. This disposition unfits me for such operations where by inattention or forgetfulness, important matters, connected with one's system of proceeding, are passed over.

I shall in my next forward your account, ballance due from you \$7,-809.82, not crediting a years salary.

I am with regard

Dear General

Your obedient humble servant

WM. BINGHAM

General Cobb

*Cobb to Knox, Gouldsborough, 15 August 1797 [KP]*⁶

Gouldsboro' August 15th 1797

My dear Friend:

Yesterday I receiv'd your letter of the 8th instant. I have been long waiting for it, that I might know you was at St. George's. I hear nothing from Bearing and I think he cannot be here 'till the beginning or middle of next month, altho' he calculated being at Gouldsboro' by this time. I am much pleased to hear you are so well satisfied with your mills, etc. Do make all of them profitable if possible, and I hope the commissioners will adjust your disputes with the settlers.⁷ They are a cursed ungratefull crew, but I believe that nothing but the strong arm of force, or your surrendering of the property, will ever give peace.

I am at present worse than a widower—Mrs. Cobb, her daughter and the two boys are gone to Taunton. They left me a fortnight since, and will not return 'till the middle of next month. I would certainly see you at Montpelier if it was not for the uncertainty of Baring's arrival. I receiv'd yesterday a letter from Bingham, the only one since March last. It seems that Jarvis has offer'd Bingham his lands on the Union River at two dollars per acre—say 50,000 acres. He will do well if he gits one quarter of that sum for the whole together. He may in time obtain the price he mentions by retail. It would be well if La Roche was bo't out as some of those lands can now be sold for two dollars, and his lines interfere very much

⁶ KP, XL. 170.

⁷ After the disturbance caused by Samuel Ely, commissioners had been appointed to settle disputes between Knox and his tenants.

with ours. I am running our settlers lots, laying out fishing towns, trying to collect something for logs, and preaching the principles of civilization to the people, with as much effect, probably, as other preachers.

Let me hear from you by every post, as long as you stay, how your affairs go on, as you know I feel warmly interested in your prosperity. Adieu

D. COBB

Cobb to Bingham, Gouldsborough, 7 September 1797 [BP]⁸

My dear Sir:

Gouldsboro' September 7th. 1797

I return'd here three days since from General Knox's, where I parted with Mr. Baring and his friend Mr. Hope proceeding on their tour to Boston.

Your letter of the 27th of July came here soon after my departure, and I have now before me this letter, together with yours of the 21st of the same month.

In a conversation with the Treasurer at Boston on the subject of settlers now on the lands, and on examining together the contract between you and the Commonwealth, it seems that the settlers must have the deeds of their land before they can be accounted to you as such. This makes it necessary that the settlers rights should be survey'd and deeds given them, before the gentlemen appointed to take their numbers can proceed on their business. My attention to this subject and to the settlers of Gouldsboro', none of whom has Shaw ever quieted, has taken up almost the whole of my time since my arrival in the beginning of July.

The character of this country is rapidly increasing in the estimation of the people of Massachusetts and Connecticut, and at present stands high with that class of characters who emigrate from the counties of Worcester and Hampshire, some of whom came into this country the last and the present year and are settled on the Penobscot and between that and the Kennebeck. Those from Connecticut prefer, at present, Union River and the shores of Frenchman's Bay. They are now purchasing from the settlers at those places. Their object, however, appears to be chiefly mills and commerce. Their can be no doubt of a great change of public opinion respecting this country, as you hear of its good qualities in almost every village at the westward, where a few years since it was execrated.

I know of nothing more of Van Burkells concern than what you mention. When in Boston I made an enquiry and was inform'd that his law-

⁸ There is an almost identical copy of this letter in CP.

yer did not attend the court because he had not hear'd from Van Burkell after the suit was bro't. That is, I conceive he had not receiv'd a proper fee for doing the business. General Knox has made the same enquiries. This business I imagine remains in the same situation it did before the action was bro't, and if any other proceedings take place, you must be the person that will first know it. It is however of consequence that this claim of Van Burkells, whatever it may be, should be adjusted and settled. I mentioned this subject to Mr. Baring, as well as the purchase of La Roches lands.

I was informed at Boston that of the votes returned from this District last June, a small majority was against a seperation. I have ever had my doubts of any great advantages arising to this District from its independence, and these have increas'd since I have been more acquainted with the inhabitants of the country. That the value of the territory of the District would be advanced by such an event, is certain, that as a State it would be much more respectable and important, and probably thereby encrease emigrations to it. Its participation by its representatives in a bra[n]ch of the National Legislature would further these general advantages. But what in my opinion is a counter ballance to all these advantages is the principle of distributive justice and a regard to the rights of private property, which the great body of the people of this country have no just ideas of, and they are to determine, as jurors, what justice is. The reason at present why so few bad verdicts are given by jurors in this District is the opinion generally entertained of the great abilities of the judges of the Supreme Court, and the respect and regard, or rather fear, they have for or of the laws of the old government of which they are a part *only*. But remove this restraint, and you will have little justice in the District, except in the western counties. The principle of levelism is so strong in man that it requires a length of time for him to be habited to the principles of civil order before it can be so far subdued (it can never be eradicated) as to admit of his doing justice to others. Thence, large land holders have most to fear from the independence of this District. You are not to infer from this opinion of mine that the people of this country are worse than others—they are the same as others under like circumstances, as man always will be. The only mode by which large property in new settling countries can be protected and preserv'd is to have those countries a part of an old organiz'd government. The state of Vermont is a recent instance of the villany of men in the first stages of civil government, when unrestrain'd and unconnected. They are probably now a tolerable orderly government, but within fifteen years past, they were the greatest sett of legal robbers that ever existed.

Any orders you may send for scantling or other lumber shall be executed, only be particular as to size and length, and the use for which they are designed, as scantling is made here from pine, spruce and hemlock. The two last are not so durable when they are exposed alternately to be wet, but they hold nails the best. The larch timber of this country is equal, if not superior, to red cedar for durability, and is particularly usefull for posts in board fences etc. You may have any quantity of these. The size and length must be mentioned.

In my letter of the 30th of October last I inform'd you that your deeds etc. were safe in my possession, and that they should be forwarded to you by a safe conveyance, or by post if you desir'd it. You have never intimated to me since what you wish'd to have done with them 'till your last letter. You will receive them by Mr. Baring. In the same letter I inform'd you of all the material circumstances respecting the last purchases by Shaw that I had ever been made acquainted with, and I do not recollect that I ever promis'd to give you more ample information on the subject. When I was in Boston I enquir'd of General Jackson what you had done with Shaw, as you had mentioned to me when here the last year that you intended to pay all his demand before you went from Boston, and I was surpriz'd to find that you had done nothing with him and that no deeds had passed for the last purchases, when I had been expending sums of money in the finishing of one house and the repairs of another with a barn that belong'd to these purchases. This expence never would have been incur'd, neither should I have ever propos'd to you and Mr. Baring, at General Knox's the last year, the finishing of these houses, but upon the full persuasion that you would, agreeably to your promise, have taken a deed of this property before you left Boston. On a review of this subject I am persuaded you must be convinced that you have not mentioned it to me so often as you imagine, and that inattention or forgetfulness do not so particularly apply to me in the transaction of this business.

General Jackson inform'd me that you had paid Shaw two thirds of his purchases, and that the last third was due this season which, when paid, you would receive deeds of the property.

In the last paragraph of your letter you mention that in your next you shall forward my account ballance due \$7,809.82. I wish to know whether my account for the expenditure of a part of this sum, which was transmitted in October last, has ever been receiv'd or pass'd to my credit.

I think I mentioned in my little letter of the 22d ultimo that I had not

receiv'd a line from you, except the letters of July, since March last. Inclos'd you will receive my accounts up to May last.⁹

I am dear sir

Your friend and obedient servant

DAVID COBB

Cobb to Baring, Gouldsborough, 12 September 1797 [CP]

Gouldsboro' September 12th. 1797

My dear Sir:

I left General Knox's the day after your departure from thence, but I did not arrive here 'till the Tuesday following. I hope that you and your friend Mr. Hope arrived in safety at Boston.

I have frequently mentioned, in my different communications with Mr. Bingham, my ideas of the modes to be pursued for the improvement of this country. I will now endeavour, as far as I can recollect, to place them in one view under the following heads: firstly, making of roads; secondly, forming settlements on this shore and on eligible situations in the interior country with houses of entertainment; thirdly, possessing as many of the saw mills as possible that now communicate with the lumber of the purchase; and fourthly, erecting mills on such interior situations as will command and protect the lumber and for the accommodation of the new settlements. On the subject of roads, I have heretofore contemplated three great ones to pass thro' the purchase, the first from the Narrows on Penobscott River, at Buckston or No. 2, in a direct route to Machias. The first year I came into this country I applied to the Court of Sessions to lay out this road, and they were then kind eno' to appoint a committee for that purpose, who have already lay'd it out as far as Union River and will proceed whenever I request it or perhaps sooner. This road from Penobscot to Union River is not within the purchase, but the proprietor's of this tract will willingly pay for the making of it, as a late law compels them to do it with damages; but after it passes the Union River it goes thro' Townships No. 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12 of the purchase and ought soon to be made or it will probably be done by order of the country at much greater expense. The second great road is from the head of the tide on Penobscot River direct to Passamaquoddy or Schudic River; but as this road will not at present be used, it will only be necessary to open it as far as the east

⁹ These accounts are in BP. For the accounts of the Bingham speculation generally, see the Appendices.

line of the first tier of townships belonging to the purchase, from Penobscot River; the other part may remain for future operations. The third road is from Gouldsboro north to the head of the purchase so as to intersect the two abovementioned roads at right angles. There will be no occasion of opening this road further than the Great Falls of Narragagus at present, which is eighteen miles distant, six or eight miles of which are already open'd. Other smaller roads will naturally require to be open'd as settlements are made. On the second general arrangement, of forming settlements on this shore, etc., it has ever been my opinion that the building of a few houses, say six or eight, on the point in Gouldsboro' harbour would be of the first consequence to the future improvements of this country, not only for the temporary residence of the families of those settlers destin'd to the back lands who may arrive here, but for the accommodation of traders, fisherman and others who yearly visit this country for traffic, some of whom would undoubtedly be induced to continue if they had these accommodations. The different mechanics, such as housewrights, blacksmiths, shoemaker's, tanners and brick makers, etc., that might be induced by fair words or pensions to come here could then likewise have a place of residence. Indeed I am persuaded that these houses would be occupied as soon as they are finish'd. The interior situations that have appeared most eligible for commencing village settlements, are the forks of Union River in No. 20, the Great Falls of Narragagus in No. 17, the western and eastern branches of Machias River, the Schudic River and perhaps hereafter some spot may be found favourable for this purpose near the Penobscott, say the Passadunky. Houses and mills should be erected in these places as they become objects of attention to settlers. Whenever the road is open that leads from the narrows of Penobscott River to Machias, one or two good houses of entertainment should be built upon it. The third general principle will perhaps require no observations upon it, as you are already acquainted with the reasons that demand the purchase of these mills, more especially as thereby is secured a proportion of the lumber, for the logs taken off the lands, that no other measure can effect. The fourth general principle is so self evidently usefull that it requires but one explanatory observation, that is, on rivers where the mills on the lower fall cannot be purchased reasonably, by erecting mills on the interior parts of the river, the lumber above is protected and preserved from being plunder'd for the use of the mills below.

This is a concise view of the general outlines for operations in this country, which if pursued, cannot I think fail of producing all the benefits that you at present wish or expect; but to make the system perfect a



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communication should be open'd between this port and Boston by a regular coasting vessel of from 80 to 100 tons. This would ultimately be no expence to the concern, as I conceive she would maintain and clear herself if no misfortune takes place. She may be annually insur'd for a small premium. In carrying this system into operation, I should recommend commencing it upon rather a small scale, as thereby one should be able to correct errors without much injury. The inclos'd scedule will give a view of the number of hands at present requir'd and their expences, and the mode of employment; and the expence of the coaster boats for my use in passing to the different parts of the Purchase. Articles for the buildings should be kept on hand, such as lyme, nails, glass, paints, hinges and latches, iron and mill saws for the mills, provisions for the workmen, and some person employ'd to superintend and prevent their waiste. It would be a pleasing circumstance if a small store of English and West India goods could be connected with the operations here; but you have already given reasons why the concern should have no connections with such a measure. My son would be very happy to undertake this business if he had a small capital to commence it.

Whether all, any or none of these measures are to be put in execution, it is of the first importance that the townships on which settlers reside should be run out, the lots to those settlers ascertained, and deeds given them and all claims of whatsoever nature adjusted and settled, that you may know where your property is.

To carry forward any measures, you must be sensible, will require funds adequate to the operation, and those funds should be placed in such a manner as to be easily commanded. I have been so much distress'd on this account already that I feel extremely unwilling to undertake any measure 'till I know that funds are deposited for the purpose. To draw on Philadelphia is almost always attended with loss to the concern and extremely painfull to me. By this conveyance you will receive Mr. Bingham['s] deeds and papers. I receiv'd another line on my return here from General Knox's, of no very pleasing feature. He complains of my inattention about his concerns with Shaw's last purchase, a business I had never any thing to do with, and therefore feel no guilt on the charge. I have returned him an answer. If you think of it, you may mention that I saw Shaw's scedule in General Jackson's possession and there is nothing more in it than the three purchases on this Point, only Shaw has charged full high for his trouble, but as Mr. Bingham has already paid two thirds of the purchases without a deed, he had better pay the other in silence and take a deed. Jackson has had trouble enough in this business and he despises Shaw as

much as Mr. Bingham does. The sooner he is disconnected with the character the better.

I shall depend upon your giving me a letter before you leave Boston, and if any of the measures I have propos'd should meet your approbation, I wish you to mention them, as it will be necessary to make provision this fall for engaging men at the westward to be here early in the spring. I have sent for two carpenters. The wharff I have engaged to have enlarged and repair'd, and I am on the point of a contract for building the saw mill at the Falls of Narraguagus. The old saw mill you saw going is now down and the new one raising in its place.

Please to remember me respectfully to your friend Mr. Hope and believe me ever, with esteem

Your most obedient servant

D. COBB

[Cobb's endorsement dates this September 15th]

Knox to Cobb, Boston, 16 September 1797 [CP]

My dear Cobb:

Boston 16 September 1797

Notwithstanding your savage ungraciousness in leaving me at Montpelier so abruptly contrary to my earnest entreaties, yet I cannot, such is the weakness of my nature, refrain from embracing an opportunity presented in the navy yard by a Captain Snow of writing you a line, and of communicating you a few occurrences.

1st. As relates to Harry. He is well, and as busy as a devils needle, in preparing for the launch which is fixed for Wednesday the 20. The President of the United States, and all the eastern world will be here. From the probable crowd and indiscretion, it may be expected as many lives will be lost as in a small action.¹

2dly. As it relates to myself. I left Montpelier on the evening of the 5th and arrived here in twenty four hours. I was summoned by the sickness of Mrs. Knox who had been brought to bed of a dead child, and consequences followed which were deemed highly dangerous. But thank God she has surmounted all and will probably in a few days be able to ride abroad. My son is arrived at New York and expected here dayly.

3. The yellow fever rages at Philadelphia which is almost depopulated—the last information, 60 or 70 in two days died. The very demon of

¹ This refers to the launching of the U.S.S. *Constitution*. See J. Winsor, *Memorial History of Boston*, III. 332.

disease seems to be let loose in the West Indies, and in the southern parts of the continent.

4th. Some illiberal attacks have been made on Alexander Hamilton, in a thing published under the direction of Beckley, but ostensibly written by one Callender, a short hand writer of Congress, when you were there.² The charge, it seems, was speculation and one James Reynolds, the agent. Some short notes or letters written to Reynolds by Hamilton were published as a proof. Hamilton it seems conceived himself in such a predicament, as to get rid of the charge of speculation at any rate, and therefore he confesses a course of adultery with Reynolds wife, for which it appears he paid smart [?] money in 92 to the tune of 1,500 or 2,000 dollars, a pretty deduction from 3,500 dollars!³

Myself and most of his other friends conceive this confession humiliating in the extreme, and such a text as will serve his enemies for a commentary while he Alexander lives, and his name is mentioned as a public man for employment. I wish I could send you the pamphlet but there is but one in town which is not to be had.

It is probable that peace will take place in Europe. Mr. Tallyrand is Minister of Foreign Affairs, and is probably our friend. I have no doubt our ministers will be received, but previously the majority of the executive of France must be displaced or forced to resign.

Let me know from your own view and information how many boards could be collected in your vicinity say during the months of October and November.

God bless you and yours,
H. KNOX

Mr. Baring staid here only four days and left the town before day the morning I arrived, therefore I saw him not.

Harry gives his love.

H.K.

*Cobb to Bingham, Castine, 22 September 1797 [BP]*⁴

Castine September 22. 1797

My dear Sir:

I am here where the Courts of Common Pleas etc. for the county of

² In his *History of the United States for 1796*, James Thomson Callender first "broke" the story of Hamilton's relations with Reynolds.

³ A reference to Hamilton's salary as Secretary of the Treasury.

⁴ There is an almost identical copy of this letter in CP.

Hancock are now sitting. I have ever consider'd it a duty to attend these courts occasionally that I may thereby be better acquainted with the people, their manners and habits, and be known to them as an inhabitant of their country, but more especially that I may be at hand when any measures are propos'd for making roads, bridges, etc. that pass thro' your purchase; as they have the power of doing these things and assessing the lands for the expence. They rarely ever want a disposition to do it in the most extravagant manner, when they can compel *the large land holders* to pay it.

I wrote Mr. Baring the last week, at his request, the general outlines of a system of operations to be persued, so as to bring forward this country as an object of reputation and profit to the concern. You will naturally see it when Mr. Baring returns to Philadelphia. Measures like those cannot, I think, fail of gratifying all your wishes, especially if you interest a number of individuals in the purchase of some of the townships.

I am inform'd by a person who resides up the Penobscot River that Parsons, who has Leonard's contract for Township No. 26, is coming this fall to make a road from the river out to the township and to commence his settlement upon it. You, no doubt, recollect all the circumstances of this contract, a copy of which was sent to you in my letter of September or October 1795; and the conversation I had with Parsons this last May at Northampton, where I went on purpose to see him and others, you have in my letter of July last. As the contracting party in this instance has already fail'd in complying with the terms of his engagement, and as you have heretofore, I think, express'd that you thought this contract a bad one, which however is very different from my conceptions of it, you have now, perhaps, an opportunity of evading it, if you think it necessary. The sooner I have your directions on this subject, the better, as Parsons will probably be here the next month. I have already given him encouragement that every indulgence would be granted to those who came forward with spirit and exertion to improve and cultivate this country. I really think that if he commences a settlement in No. 26 with resolution, that it will be, ultimately, the most valuable contract that could be made for the concern.⁵

Mr. Jarvis who resides here, the brother and agent of Leonard Jarvis of Boston, was directed by his brother to converse with me about the sale of lands to you that lie between the Penobscot townships and Union River. He says his brother will take $1\frac{1}{2}$ dollars per acre for them. My answer was that I did not know your views on this subject, but I believ'd

⁵ This is the last reference to the Parsons-Leonard contract that I have found. Apparently nothing ever came of it, despite the fact that Oliver Leonard himself finally settled in Orrington.

that you did not intend to make any further purchases in this country. Some of these lands on the Union River have been sold to settlers for two dollars per acre, and all that are thus situated will bring that and more; but if the whole are taken in mass, they are not worth more than fifty or seventy five cents at most. These lands are good, but no better than yours, only as to situation at present. But there is a vast difference between the price a settler gives for an acre of land, and the price to be given for townships that include a surface of water and uncultivable places as well as land.

Mr. Jarvis, I am told, is much embarrass'd at present and would be happy to dispose of his property in this country. If you wish to purchase, I have no doubt a good speculation could be made, but the purchases that would be more immediately beneficial are La Roche's and Jones's in Trenton and No. 8.

I will endeavour to communicate with you more frequently.

I am, dear sir, with respect and esteem your most obedient servant

DAVID COBB

*Cobb to Knox, Gouldsborough, 1 October 1797 [KP]*⁶

Gouldsboro' October 1st. 1797

My dear Friend:

Your letter of the 16th ultimo by Captain Snow I receiv'd a few days since; and it is with pleasure I acknowledge the goodness, not weakness, of your heart in giving me a letter. I have an apology for what you are pleas'd to call my abrupt departure from Montpelier, as it was remote from the place that required my attention, but the manner of doing it, if it did partake of the savage, it is no more than what you and the rest of my friends must expect from the constant disappointments I have meet with in conducting the business of this country. Indeed, I am fearfull that if I reside here another year under the same neglects of the past that I shall be not only almost but altogether a savage. The inattention of our friends to this country and me is unpardonable. I can write and they will promise.

Hamilton is fallen for the present, but if he fornicates with every female in the cities of New York and Philadelphia, he will rise again, for purity of character, after a period of political existence is not necessary for public patronage. I should like very much to see the pamphlet the devils have wrote against him.

I hope for peace, but I do not expect such an one as we all wish—dis-

⁶ KP, XLI. 13.

truction has not yet done its compleat work with the old world. They are too numerous and too vicious to exist as governments.

Philadelphia is again unhappily experiencing the ill effects arising from the democracy of the city. You already know some of my crude observations upon this subject, and have not a doubt that the unhealthyness of all cities will ever be in proportion to the prevalence of that principle.

I am more and more pleas'd with this country. A late excursion into the woods has given me new ideas. There is great quantities of excellent land, fine mill seats, delightful situations, rich intervals and meadows and intend every thing to invite the farmer who has hardyhood enough to attack the forrests. Only let us go foremost and they will certainly follow. Our concern are asleep. Mr. Baring when here directed me to commence a settlement eighteen or twenty miles in the rear of this place, a fine spot, and told me he should leave with Mr. John Codman funds for my use. My not having a letter from him at Boston makes me conclude he has omitted it, as he did the last year. Do inquire of Codman what has been done and whether he will answer my drafts. To be directed to expend sums of money and have no funds provided to meet it, has already distracted me; and I am sometimes almost induced to swear that I will never engage in any measure 'till I have the money in hand.

Captain Godfrey is waiting for this letter. He calls at Hays's⁷ before he leaves Boston, where leave a letter for me to return by him.

I am happy to hear of Mrs. Knox's recovery to health, and I joy with you in the return of your son. Present me affectionately to all your family. I wish our old friend Harry had done with frigates. I expect he will send me some cyder if it is not too dear. If it is, I must still drink rum.

Adieu and believe me ever affectionately your friend

D. COBB

We have no boards here and shall not have any this fall. Perhaps you find some at Machias.

Bingham to Cobb, Philadelphia, 2 October 1797 [CP]

Dear General:

Philadelphia October 2d 1797

I received your letter of September 7th dated at Gouldsborough, and find that there are still objections to the enumeration of the settlers, on account of their not having had their deeds given to them, without which you

⁷ M. M. Hays, the Boston merchant, was a close friend of both Knox and Cobb and often cashed bills for them.

say, according to the contract, they cannot be accounted to me as such.

This is certainly a very partial and inaccurate idea of the business. The only settlers which the contract contemplates as being entitled to deeds are those which were established previous to the date of this instrument. Those of them, which were settled before January 1784, were to have a release of one hundred acres, on the payment of five dollars; and if before 1791 and after 1784, the release of the same quantity on the payment of twenty dollars. But at the same time it is stipulated that in order to be entitled to this deed, the settlers shall make payment, as aforesaid, within two years. But this arrangement only regards those settlers that were already established on the lands, previous to the date of the contract. All those which have arrived since January, 1791, form separate and independent claims. On a supposition that the settlers of the former description do not pay their consideration money for their lands, without which they are not entitled to a deed, will they not be classed in the enumeration? Or will it be most expedient to give them a deed, and take their obligation for the consideration money, in order to constitute a claim for the deduction of the thirty dollars, to be allowed for each settler?

From the accounts I have received, it appears that there are great numbers of settlers which have, since 1791, fixed themselves on the Kennebeck lands. I suppose there are likewise many on the lower Million in the same predicament. These are all to be accounted to me as such, by the provisions of our agreement, and are thus specified on the back of the deed. They have nothing to do with those which are recognized as being entitled to deeds, from their settlement previous to 1791. Hence you will see the necessity of some decisive plan of operation, of a different nature, from what you mention, which will admit of immediate recourse to the enumeration, as no time is to be lost. I want the deeds, and I cannot obtain them without this specification of the number of settlers, or paying the forfeit. On receiving the papers, you will observe what is expedient, and act accordingly.

You can impart your ideas to General Knox, who being in Boston, will be able to regulate this business in a satisfactory manner. It is highly important that it should be no longer neglected.

There will be no difficulty in making immediate conveyances to the settlers of a previous date to 1791, as you can be empowered to effect the same.

If any difficulties occur to you and any explanations are wanting, please to make them known, as I wish this tedious and disagreeable affair immediately terminated.

I am well pleased with the account you give me of the rising reputation of this country. *Magna est veritas et prevalebent.*

I cannot view the result of the separation of Maine, in the same disadvantageous point of light, that you do. On the contrary, I can foresee many and great benefits that would attend such an event, as connected with an increased consequence, which this country would derive from it.

Mr. Baring did not bring the deeds you mentioned you would forward by him. He has recently made an excursion to New York and desired me to inform you that on his return, he would write to you fully.

I have never as yet received from Shaw an enumeration of the purchases made of him, and do not at present know the extent of them. I desired General Jackson to purchase as little as possible, and none that had not an indisputable title. My enquiries of you were to determine this latter point. It would have been madness in me to have paid Shaw for his houses and lots, at an extravagant price, without knowing whether the title was unincumbered.

This business remains in an unsettled disagreeable situation, and will continue so, unless you and General Knox will give me some clear and intelligible ideas on the subject. Being on the spot, you can by a small effort accomplish the point, and bring into light this business, which is now involved in a chaos of confusion.

With respect to your accounts, I will write to you more particularly by the next opportunity.

I requested you in my last to procure for me a quantity of lumber. Instead of five inches, I wish the boards to be six inches wide, and to be sawed with great care and attention.

The scantling is to be cut into two pieces, to serve as posts for board fences. Since the receipt of your last, I find they ought to be made of birch.

I am about making some considerable improvements on a country seat, I have lately purchased,⁸ and shall probably forward you a list of some additional articles of lumber, that I shall have occasion for.

In the mean time, with my best compliments to your family, I am with sincere regard

Dear General

Your obedient humble servant

WM. BINGHAM

General Cobb

⁸ This was Lansdowne, one of the most beautiful country estates of the day. For the purchase see M. L. Brown, "Mr. and Mrs. William Bingham of Philadelphia," in *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, LXI. 305-306, where a picture of the house is given.

Cobb to Bingham, Gouldsborough, 11 October 1797 [BP]⁹

Gouldsborough October 11th. 1797

My dear Sir:

My last letter was from Castine. On my return here, I commenced an excursion into the woods, and with other places I visited No. 17 on the Narraguagus, the great falls of which are exceedingly well calculated for mills. It extends one hundred rods in length and the perpendicular descent cannot be less than sixty feet. The township, as to soil, is good, not however the best. One half of it has been burnt and is now in plains or bushes thro' which wind a number of rivulets borderd with excellent natural meadows affording two and three tons per acre. The rest of the township is chiefly hard wood and some of it very good with large spots of interval upon the river. The great extent of natural meadows in this township will insure its settlement by farmers; those of that class who came here the last year to settle on this township, and who promis'd me the last spring to improve their lots there, have been prevented by timidity from undertaking it. Their wives and children have so many of their little fears about them, they cannot be persuaded to live eight or ten miles from other inhabitants. But let me go foremost and they will certainly follow. Agreeably to this idea, and in conformity with Mr. Barings opinion, I have contracted for building a mill at the falls in No. 17 and intended to have had it finish'd before the severity of the winter came on, so as to have work'd it early in spring, but as there is no funds provided I shall proceed no further in the business.

A surveyor is now running out the settlers lots in Nos. 11 and 12, and another surveyor is at work on the boat harbours between this port and Schudic Point in this town. He is running those harbours into lots for fishermen. I have engaged eight of these lots, three of them to persons who have been fishing on this coast the present season and will come the next spring with their families. Two of them are from the county of Plymouth, Massachusetts, the other from Portsmouth, New Hampshire. The mill I contracted to have rebuilt is now up and will be finish'd this month. The timber is already procured for repairing and enlarging the wharf. I expect two carpenters by the return of a vessel from Boston. These characters I hope to make permanent here.

I have call'd upon my agents who had the superintendence of the logging business in different quarters, to make their returns. None have been receiv'd yet.

⁹ There is an almost identical copy of this letter in CP.

I am more and more persuaded that you can never have any adequate returns for the pillage committed on the forrests, but by occupying immediately the mill seats on all the rivers of any extent, that are above those now improv'd by the present inhabitants, even if you could purchase the present mills at a reasonable price, which however is not to be done. As by this means you throw a number of inhabitants into those townships where mills are erected, and where you want them, at the same time, you put a compleat check to all future pillage; and if at any time, to prevent the poor devils below from starving, you permit the taking of timber, you can always ascertain the quantity taken, as it must pass your dams, and then the toll can be received accordingly.

Mr. Baring's early departure from Boston has prevented your receiving the deeds and papers by him as was intended. General Jackson has however inform'd me that they have been forwarded by a safe conveyance. I hope they have been receiv'd.

The deeds to Messrs. Willing and Crammond¹ arrived here yesterday, and this morning they were sent off with my son to Machias for recording; when they return, they will be sent in like manner to Castine, after which they shall be forwarded by the earliest conveyance to General Jackson at Boston from whom you will receive them.

I am dear sir, with esteem and respect

Your most obedient servant

DAVID COBB

Honorable William Bingham

*Cobb to Bingham, Gouldsborough, 19 October 1797 [BP]*²

My dear Sir:

Gouldsborough October 19th 1797

My son returned here the last evening from Machias, and to morrow morning he setts off for Castine to have the deeds recorded in this county; by the time he returns here a vessel from this port will sail for Boston, by which the deeds will be convey'd to General Jackson.

Your letter of the 13th ultimo was receiv'd on the 15th instant. Particular attention shall be paid to the lumber you request, but as the winter is the only time that logs can be procured from the forrests, it is probable these articles cannot be ready for you 'till next spring. For your posts I

¹ By this time, Willing and Cramond had been fully authorized to act as trustees for the Baring property in this country. See above, p. 675.

² There is an almost identical copy of this letter in CP.

shall procure the larch, which has the reputation in Europe as well as here, of being the most durable of woods. The scantling you mention for this purpose of 16½ feet in length, is I conceive for two posts.

Yesterday I receiv'd a letter from a Mr. De Forest, a young merchant at Sullivan, requesting the purchase of Township No. 20 on Union River. He is lately from Connecticut and one of a merchantile house at Newfield in that State.³ I returned him for answer that I was not at liberty to dispose of any of your townships on that river, as they were under previous engagements. My reasons for returning this answer were that this township and No. 14 below it (Van Burkell's) are two of the best as to soil and situation of any in the whole Purchase, and thence I conceive ought not to be sold in townships, but to settlers. Number 20 likewise has two valuable mill seats, one of which I intended to occupy in the same manner I have propos'd to do with the falls of Narraguagus. A large quantity of excellent pine trees are near to this mill seat, and which for the present escaped the devouring clutches of the infernal plunderers. Furthermore, I knew that Mr. De Forest's object in the propos'd purchase was solely the possession of these pines and mill seats, and I almost hate the man who purchases or settles in this country for the purpose of lumbering only. However, as he appears by his letter to be very anxious for an immediate purchase, you may perhaps think it best to comply with his wishes. I shall with pleasure obey any directions you may communicate.

Since the conveyance of this property to Messrs. Willing and Cramond, it will be necessary for me to have a joint power for the management of the business here. And whatever measures are to be persued, the sooner I am made acquainted with them the better.

I am dear sir with respect

Your obedient servant

DAVID COBB

Honorable William Bingham

Knox to Bingham, Boston, 22 October 1797 [BP]

Boston 22 October 1797.

My dear Sir:

In addressing you, I feel the awkwardness of a confessing and repenting sinner. But like him I hope for pardon, not for my own merits, but because

³ I believe this was Alexander Deforest of Newtown, Connecticut. See *Heads of Families, 1790 Census, Connecticut*, 20. I have not been able to discover a Newfield in that state and believe Cobb made a slip of the pen when he wrote it.

I beieve you would have no gratification in my condemnation.

Your letter of the 30th of the last month came safely to hand. Yours of the 10th of July I received at St. Georges.⁴

Although my name was not in the list of persons presented to the public on the attempts to launch the frigate, yet I was present to participate deeply of the mortification. A contrary sensation however took place yesterday. We were highly delighted, by a fine launch of one of the finest vessels on the ocean. You know we Boston people speak in the superlative. For my part, all expence and risque notwithstanding, I am one who rejoices in the creation of every mean of independence and national strength. I hope to see in the course of ten years hence that number of ships of the line and frigates.⁵

I am much gratified at Mr. Barings handsome compliments of my situation and improvements. I have not the shadow of doubt of the ultimate success in the most ample degree. My expences are made, and my reimbursement will commence with the peace for which I am preparing with all my might. I shall have but little short of *thirty* saws going in a short period, which will be in a condition to saw many millions of feet of boards annually and a certainty of a sufficiency of stock, or logs to furnish the mills for many years. At present, insurance is so high that lumber cannot be exported either to the West Indies or Europe with any profit, and all building in America seems suspended for the present. But a peace and the supplies required both in Europe and the West Indies will make lumber rise, while all or most other articles will fall.

My five locks at St. Georges Falls will all be completed this fall, and passable in fifteen or twenty days from the present time. They will save in my own operations, and produce from others, a revenue of 50 per cent annually upon the capital expended upon them.

My settlers are mostly tranquilized, and will probably be among the most industrious, orderly and thriving settlers in any new country in the United States.

I do not think it very probable the District of Maine will be anxiously desirous of independence or that it will be effected in less than seven years. I hope before that time you will have made such modifications and sales of the property as to be uninjured by any event. But I beieve, let the cir-

⁴ The letter of 30 September is in KP, LV. 176; there is an almost completely illegible letter-book copy of it in BP. The letter of 10 July is printed above, pp. 850-852.

⁵ When an attempt was made to launch the *Constitution* on 20 September 1797, the ship stuck, and when a second attempt was made two days later, it stuck again. Finally, on 21 October a successful launching was achieved. See J. Winsor, *Memorial History of Boston*, III. 333-334.

A D V E R T I S E M E N T.

FOR THE BENEFIT OF THOSE, WHOM IT MAY CONCERN.

THE *Subscriber* has agreed, with all the *settlers*, seated on his back LANDS, and sold LANDS in the same quarter to numerous and respectable *Emigrants* from the *States Westward*, on principles promising them great prosperity and the establishment of harmony and *good order* throughout that fertile region. He conceives therefore, that this is the proper moment to announce in the most public and solemn manner that in future, *No usurpation of his lands will be tolerated.*

AS the LAND is, and will be surveyed into lots, no hope of impunity will arise from any supposed secrecy in the offence. Every regular *settler* has bound himself to discountenance and discover such lawless persons—It would be deemed madness among *Farmers* to suffer a WOLF to enter and remain among their sheep, much more so would it be for regular settlers after having *legally* engaged to pay a valuable consideration for their LANDS to suffer an audacious usurper to enter and remain amongst them, SCATTERING THE SEEDS OF DISCORD, MISERY AND INSURRECTION WITH BOTH HANDS;

ANY Person therefore, who shall in defiance of this notice, and in defiance of the laws, usurp lands of the *Subscriber* will be prosecuted for the damages that may ensue; suffer the utter loss of his labor and fixtures, and be refused Land at any price whatever.

BUT the Young, Industrious and orderly yeomanry and Artists throughout New-England, are invited to view the LANDS of the *Subscriber*, lying west of PENOBSCOT-RIVER, and extending to within 15 miles of Kennebec-river, and contiguous to a line, on which it is in contemplation to open, and establish a Turnpike-road from river to river.

THESE rich LANDS are considered by impartial Judges, soil situation and climate combined, as affording as many at least, if not more advantageous, to young Agriculturists, than any other within the United States.

THESE lands are to be sold for actual and immediate settlement either for money or upon credit.

A perfect title and deeds of Warranty will be given on payment.

TIMBER and CORD-WOOD STEALERS throughout the PATENT, strip and waste men who instead of honestly cultivating the soil, attempt meanly and infamously to gain property by this species of theft, will incur, and receive all the punishment, and pay all the damages, which the law shall inflict; and also all those, who shall AID and ABET them in their unlawful conduct.

HENRY KNOX.

Montpelier, Thos. J. Fox,
St. George's River, Nov. 27, 1801

not in Mass. Registry, 1801

noted
25-

General Henry Knox Lays Down the Law to Squatters

cumstance of independence happen when it may, that the security of property will *not* be lessened by it. It certainly will be my interest and duty to endeavor by any seasonable sacrifice that there should be no violation of contracts, nor injury to real estates. But it is questionable whether they would choose me as cheif magistrate or, if they would, whether my own or the interest of my friends would be promoted thereby.

I am extremely sorry that your prospects of European sales seem to be so uncertain. I was in hopes that Sir Francis Baring or Mr. Talon would have effected a favorable sale of the Kennebec tract in the whole, or in part. I beleive it would be a very favorable operation to any monied capital, and produce an abundant profit. But it must be acted upon. It must be populated, it must have roads cut, and establishments effected here and there. In short, in order to be able to reimburse its cost with great profit, it must be lighted up. People must know it.

The emigrations from the southern parts of this State, from the counties of Worcester and Essex and from the southern parts of New Hampshire, are great, and incessant. Lands, of course, rise at all the points to which the emigrations tend. But still there is very little competition among the monied men to get possessed of lands, although a disposition is creating, and encreasing to that end. And it must encrease, as a monied capital shall be accumulated. But at present no sales of large tracts can be effected, as the Georgia bubble has left the most melancholy impressions, by the wrecks it made, on the minds of men, otherwise favorably disposed to landed operations. Besides, some of the Georgia purchasers were holders of lands in Maine, and they are now compelled to part with those lands at a forced sale. It will therefore be next to impossible to raise any considerable sum at present in this quarter from the sale of lands in Maine. If this be true as I beleive it is, how would it answer to endeavor to sell to Messrs. Hope and Baring, at a proper price, the whole of the lower tract? I am inclined to the opinion from his favorable sentiments of the country, that he would embrace this idea. If this could be effected, it might relieve you and relieve me.

I am glad that Mr. Barings opinion of the value of the Kennebec tract is changed for the better. I have good reason to beleive that if he could actually have viewed it, that he would have been charmed with it. Its lumber, and the situations for mills, are in themselves sources of unbounded wealth. But it requires a special agent, who should actively employ a capital, to exhibit a specimen of what the country is susceptible. At present, it is all darkness there, save the glimmerings made by the plunderers of the lumber.

When Mr. Baring was at my house, I did not speak to him on the subject of the loan he furnished me the last year, as I then expected to see him again in this town, as he informed me that he should reside here some time, but he had departed just before my arrival, having been suddenly called away.

It would indeed afford me a precious consolation to be able to pay punctually the amount borrowed. But the great sums which I have been constrained to expend or relinquish my pursuits and expectations, will render punctual payment *extremely difficult* if not utterly impracticable. If payment should be insisted upon, the first of January, it would prostrate me, and blast all my hopes. But if he could extend the loan for one or at most two years, I should gladly stipulate any compensation that could be desired. I have been attempting a sale or negotiation which would have enabled me to comply in part, but which has failed.

Suffer me therefore, my dear friend, to endeavor to effectuate a postponement of this demand for the above mentioned period. I say nothing about obligation to you. That is already too great to be expressed. In one sentence, a postponement will be my salvation; a rigid demand of payment, my ruin. For Gods sake therefore exert yourself on the occasion and let me know the result.

Mrs. Knox was dangerously sick having been brought to bed with a dead child. She is now recovered and unites with me and my daughter in offering our respects to Mrs. Bingham and the young ladies, not for the world omitting Miss Willing.

The Messrs. Orleans⁶ are here. They will go tomorrow for Portsmouth. I hope they will be pleased with their eastern tour. They are highly interesting.

How afflicted is Philadelphia? We all weep for her, and hope, with some mingled devotion that the like may not happen again.

Yours with true affection

H. KNOX

Ross to Cobb, Union River, 24 October 1797 [CP]

Sir:

Union River October 24th 1797

Am much pleased in having occasion to acknowledge the honor of re-

⁶ There were three Orleanist princes in America at this time, all members of a cadet branch of the French royal house: the Duc de Chartres, the Duc de Montpensier, and the Duc de Beaujolais. See F. Childs, *French Refugee Life in the United States*, 28-30.

ceiving your letter of the 19th instant, and agreeable to your request have now inclosed you a statement of the different species of lumber that has been cut in Trenton under my permission. Am sorry it has not been more productive to the proprietors, who am very sensible are much imposed on, and till they adopt some more rigorous course, 'twill always be the case. I imagine there has been eight or nine hundred thousand feet of boards sawed here this year that has been taken off the proprietor's lands, which woud have afforded a tolerable revenue coud it be collected. Am very sorry it happened so that you coud not make it convenient to visit this place last winter before they commenced logging, as several of them then shewed a willingness to comply with the terms offer'd, which however they have retracted on finding that the tresspassers were not molested. I shall esteem myself very happy in affording every assistance I can to any plan you may be pleased to adopt for the insuing winter. Am much of opinion that was you to spend a few days here in the beginning of December, 'twoud answer a good purpose.

By the inclosed statement, there is \$47.95 due you of which I have as yet received but two dollars. I will now collect it and pay it where you direct. The collectors for Trenton I will call on and pay them as you desire. There is some more wood now a cutting of which I shall render you an account. And there may be a few cords or tons more to add to the account now sent. On collection I will know the exact amount. There are no boards that I have any hopes of getting any share of except as many as fourteen logs made [and] hauled by a team owned by Major Jordan and myself of which I have not yet got the surveyor's receipt.

I have the honor to be

With much respect sir

Your most obedient humble servant

DONALD ROSS

The price of wood being low, I was obliged to depart from my first arrangement.

Honorable David Cobb, Esquire
Goldsborough

*Cobb to Bingham, Gouldsborough, 28 October 1797 [BP]*⁷

Gouldsborough October 28th. 1797

My dear Sir:

My son the last evening returned here from Castine with Mr. Barings

⁷ There is an almost identical copy of this letter in CP.

deeds compleated. They will be sent to Boston by a vessel, now in this harbour, that sails on Tuesday next.

By yesterday's mail I receiv'd your letter of October 2d. The idea I intended to convey in my letter of 7th ultimo, respecting settlers, was confined solely to those who were on the lands prior to the contract in 1791, and as they compose much the greatest number of the whole in all places where I am acquainted, but especially on the six townships, it would be an useless expence and but little advantage to you to have the others enumerated before these are quieted. To effect this it will be necessary that your deeds are ready for delivery when their lots are run out, and those of them who do not incline to receive deeds (I am told there are some of this character) cannot, I conceive, be accounted to you as settlers, but then they forfeit their right to the hundred acres. In all instances I shall make an ultimatum, not to deliver their deeds unless the money is paid or secured to be paid, for they are the last people in the world I would trust with a shilling. You very justly observe that this is a very tedious and disagreeable business. It is truly so, and much more than you have any idea of. You have, with a smooth face and fair words, to bare the vilest insults from the most vicious scoundrels that ever disgraced civil society. Your omitting to give me powers to execute my promises to these people and others to whom I have engaged lands, has given rise to a suspicion that I have no such power, and that they never shall have from you any conveyance of the property. They have even search'd the records of the two counties to know if I have any such power, and not finding it there, they conclude I have none, and laugh at my promises accordingly. One of the settlers on No. 12 to whom two years ago I promis'd an hundred acres of land, has removed out of the township for fear he should not obtain a deed on my promise, and from thence loose the labour he should bestow upon the land. It is too painfull for me to reside here and not have it in my power to comply with my promises which have been made by your requests. I cannot make any more. The time is come when you must send or employ some person here to whom you can entrust the power of giving deeds.

My funds are more than exhausted, and by this conveyance I shall send to General Jackson my bills for eight hundred dollars, which I hope you will honor. I am obliged at last, after repeated promises to have it otherwise, to resort to the most expensive mode of supplying myself with funds, and the most painfull to me.

In my next I will explain, as far as I can, Shaw's purchases that were made on this Point.

The timber that you mentioned in your letter for posts (birch) is good, but by no means so durable as the larch. You will be pleas'd to inform me which will be the most agreeable, or whether you will have part of each. The width of the boards shall be attended to.

It is the sincerest wish of my heart to serve the concern in bringing this country forward as a valuable speculation to them and an important part of the Commonwealth, separate, if possible, from any private interest in the business. But without powers and without funds it is impossible.⁸ You must be sensible that any operations here that depends on five hundred or one thousand dollar drafts on Philadelphia will never bring this country to the state you wish.

Please to remember me to Mr. Baring. I should [be] happy to hear from him.

I am, dear sir, with esteem and respect
Your obedient servant
DAVID COBB

Honorable Mr. Bingham

*Bingham to Knox, Lansdowne, 2 November 1797 [KP]*⁹

My dear General: Lansdowne November 2 1797

I have received your letter of the 22d October and did not before know that you had returned from the District.

I am exceedingly gratified at the success with which your exertions have been attended in the various improvements you have projected at St. Georges. I am well persuaded that the provision of lumber which you have secured for many years, will turn to highly profitable account, as soon as peace takes place, and the French colonies begin to be reinstated.

As for the independence of the District I am well satisfied that it should remain without prospect of taking place in less than seven years, for altho I am inclined to think many advantages would result therefrom, by encouraging and invigorating the industry of the country, yet I am not without my apprehensions that some considerable inconveniencies might be sustained from a jealousy towards the great landholders. I am therefore well satisfied with the present state of things.

I find you regret that there is so little expectation of an European sale.

⁸ In the copy in CP, Cobb adds: "Brick, in this instance, cannot be made without straw."

⁹ KP, XLI. 20.

Mr. Talon has not had the most distant hope or he certainly would have communicated it to me, whereas I have not received a line from him since his departure, nor from Sir Francis Baring, on that subject. So low is the character of the American land-jobbers, and so many tricks of swindling have been experienced by Europeans in their purchases of lands, that I have but very feeble expectations from that quarter. In the mean time I shall experience the greatest disappointment, if a sale cannot be effected. Another payment must be made to the State in June next, which will be the last but one, so that all the payments will soon be made, when on a reference to the account transmitted to you, you will observe the immense sum that I shall be in advance, beyond that received from the sale made to Mr. Baring.¹ If I had not accomplished that object, it would have been a most unfortunate state of things, in which I should have been placed.

I observe that you entertain an idea that from the favorable opinion that Mr. Baring had expressed of the lower tract, he might be persuaded to purchase the remaining half.

In the first place, no consideration would tempt me to make him this proposal, as it was well understood at the time he made the purchase that I should retain my share and cooperate with him in the improvement thereof. An abandonment of the object would be therefore, not only offensive to him, from the disappointment, but would be a breach of honor.

As for illuminating the Kennebec tract, in the manner you propose, by cutting roads thro it and peopling it, I am well persuaded that it would be attended with immense advantages.

But it requires capital, the agency of active intelligent and enterprizing characters, a proper system for the purpose, and the superintendence of the persons interested in the object, to prevent the funds being lavishly or ignorantly expended. So many objects would require a devoted attention, beyond what few persons could have time to afford, who were engaged in other pursuits. My wish has therefore been to dispose of this tract to a company, who would operate on it and improve it, by forming a systematic plan for the purpose and providing sufficient funds for carrying the same into effect.

From an apprehension that there was but little prospect of succeeding in Europe, I wished you to endeavor to make an impression upon Boston, where, I observe, from the returns of the banks, that money has begun to be very plenty, and if these depredations continue, I do not know in what manner, it can be employed, except in the investment of landed

¹ For a full statement of Bingham's expenditures, see the accounts in the Appendices.

property. But I am sorry to find that the Bostonians have no disposition towards this object, and that there is no prospect of success from that quarter.

With respect to any other part of the United States, where relief could be afforded from making a sale, I am persuaded that little hope could be entertained—except perhaps at New York where the land mania still continues to prevail, and where there exists an immense capital.

I have reason to believe that a very favorable opinion is entertained of the Eastern Lands in that place; which, from the emigrations that are continually making from the western parts of Massachusetts and Connecticut, must considerably tend to raise their value, in the general estimation. There are some great capitalists in New York, who have the command of extensive funds, and the Europeans, who are desirous of speculating in American property, have more intimate connection with that city than any other of the United States. Perhaps you might have an opportunity of making some effectual enquiries on this subject. I very much lament your not having had a conversation with Mr. Baring on the subject of the protraction of the terms of payment of your note, if you had had any desire to obtain such a facility.

At the time of contracting this engagement, it was well understood that it should be liquidated with punctuality, and I was led to guarantee the payment thereof, by a written obligation.

I think I mentioned to you in a former letter that the means Mr. Baring appropriated were the commercial funds of his fathers House, an indulgence, of which I never knew an example, for, altho credits are given to a larger extent to Houses of business, they are not in the form of loans, but merely anticipations for a short time, with remittances always made to extinguish them.

And then, a consideration is always expected by the profits that an European House derives from the current business of its customers to whom it grants such facilities. When it is considered that the employment of trading capital is supposed to be accompanied by a far greater profit than simple interest, it must be obvious that such arrangements cannot be customary.

In the period of my greatest distress, I never ventured to make such an overture, as I knew it would not be listened to.

In making this loan, Mr. Baring therefore departed from all precedents and he can never justify himself, but by the punctuality with which the engagement is complied with, and I am convinced that he has never dropped a hint to his fathers House, of the least demur or delay.

I observe that you are willing to stipulate any compensation that could be desired. But, in your dealings with such men as Mr. Baring, who are governed by sentiment, there can be no unusual consideration received. There has certainly been a great scarcity of money in London for some time past, but whatever may have been the sacrifice in loaning such a sum, they would not have the appearance of taking advantage of the distresses of a friend, by receiving more than legal interest.

I would very willingly endeavor to effectuate a postponement of this demand, but, thus situated, you will confess that it is impossible.

In recently mentioning his expectations, Mr. Baring hinted that his House could never suppose the least demur in the payment of a note, given by you, and which I had guaranteed. An interference therefore on my part to obtain a postponement would be to solicit a personal service, in a manner that I could not justify. I am therefore well persuaded that you will make arrangements for the payment with punctuality, and I am sorry to find that the operation will be attended with such inconvenience. Money appears to be so abundant at Boston that the difficulty may probably not be so great.

Your distress for want of funds, combined with other causes, operate powerfully on my wishes to obtain a partial or entire sale of the Kennebec tract.

But after the most unwearied efforts, I am still unable to effect it. It has been evident, for a long time past, that the difficulty of selling lands would rather increase than diminish, and that those who placed their dependence on such resources would fail in their expectations. You may possess such property, and starve in the midst of plenty.

To sell for less than Mr. Baring gave would yield no consideration, for all property has risen to two prices since the period when this was purchased, from the mere increase of circulating capital to represent it. And the price he gave is not double of that which it will cost us, including interest and charges. However we must not lose our hopes, for some unexpected circumstances may fortunately occur, of which we may take advantage.

It gives me great pleasure to hear of Mrs. Knox's recovery. Mrs. Bingham and the children desire to be affectionately remembered to her and your daughters.

I am with sincerity and the greatest regard

Yours etc.

WM. BINGHAM

General Knox

P.S. It is probable that Mr. Baring will soon return to Europe; and as the parties who are concerned in the purchase and improvement of the lower tract will have occasion for some person of activity and intelligence to represent and superintend their interests in this country, I find they have engaged Mr. Richards to be their agent, which is a circumstance very pleasing to me, as he appears to possess all those qualities which are essential to such an undertaking.

We shall procure his cooperation with General Cobb in the extension of the settlements, by fixing him in some quarter near the centre of the tract. I promise myself much success from their united efforts.

As many advantages might result, in fixing the most proper mode of proceeding in this business, from having a personal interview with General Cobb, I shall probably write to him, that if it should not be inconvenient to him, we should be happy to see him at Philadelphia, where Mr. Richards may be expected every day.

Yours etc.
W.B.

Baring to Cobb, Philadelphia, 6 November 1797 [CP]

Dear Sir:

Philadelphia 6th November 1797.

I have to apologize to you that you have not heard from me earlier, having delayed writing with the intention of settling with Mr. Bingham several points we have been discussing and which you want our decision upon. I received not long since your favor from Gouldsboro' addressed to me at Boston of the 15th September which place I had previously left. I am very much obliged to you for your remarks and judicious observations on the plan proper to be pursued for the settlement of our lands which for the present I shall not discuss in detail. Mr. Bingham and myself are perfectly aware of the necessity of extraordinary exertions and ready to direct them to the best effect, and with the aid of your experience and judgment I am persuaded we shall ultimately work upon a plan with as few imperfections as in an operation so speculative can be expected.

I shall in the course of this winter return myself to Europe and hope before my departure to plan all our arrangements on a systematical and permanent footing which an event I have late information of from my friends in London will now enable me to do to perfect satisfaction. At the time when I concluded my purchase of Mr. Bingham it was our intention that the European share of the property should be represented by

some person on the spot but we have not till now been able to fix on the exact character. I find to my great satisfaction that my friend Mr. Richards is named and I am expecting him out daily. Residing in this country, he will obviate the disadvantages of absent proprietors and the necessity of recurring to Europe on subjects which in the course of our operations may not admit of delay. As he will be in this country for this object solely and devote all his time to it, we have resolved to interest him in the fate of our speculation and he will reside on the lands joining his exertions to yours for their improvement. I anticipate very great satisfaction from the acquisition of a character I have, as well as Mr. Bingham, the highest opinion of and I congratulate you on that of a neighbour and coadjutor whom you already know partly and must prove a treasure to you on better acquaintance. We shall not only have the advantage of Mr. Richards's general agency as a representative of the European concern to confer with Mr. Bingham, but I am confident he will prove most actively useful in the District where we can not have too many hands and heads at work. By having by this means each an agent on the lands, there will be less necessity for writing in trifling cases for instructions which is troublesome, and the danger of inconveniences and perplexities which must necessarily arise from the decease of a sole agent is removed, but above all it is important to me that Mr. Richards has seen the parties in Europe, explained to them the nature of their property, and possesses their entire confidence. On what part of the lands he will set down or what he will immediately occupy himself with is to be discussed on his arrival and as this will involve the whole of our arrangements and there are many subjects to discuss between us, Mr. B. and myself have resolved to trouble you once more to pay us a visit here as I have no hopes of again inducing him to a trip to Maine. We shall not detain you long and Mr. R. will beyond doubt be here by the time you arrive. We shall then be able to methodize our whole plan and settle many objects which have till now remained much too vague and undetermined. I have discussed with Mr. B. the several propositions your letter contains and we agree with you pretty generally, but we have resolved to leave every thing until we see you. The only subject which perhaps will not bear delay is that of the roads and if labour must be enquired for this fall to be set to work early next spring you should certainly engage it in the manner you think most profitable. *Roads must be cut.* It is the improvement without which all others is useless and wherever we begin, we shall equally want the hands. We have also agreed on the absolute necessity of a surveyor attached to the concern and I would wish you to look out for one that you think will answer our purpose.

Designating correctly our boundary is indispensable and without a character of this description we shall for ever be working in the dark. We also agree on the propriety of keeping a vessel plying between the lands and Boston, but this is a subject we will leave till our personal meeting. Shipping is abundant and low in every part of the union at present, and it may be the best time to secure what we want, and it may be well to keep in view anything you think may suit us. The subject of funds shall be arranged as you wish and we shall avoid in future the loss and inconvenience you have heretofore experienced in this respect. I do not find any further reply to your enquiries immediately necessary and shall therefore leave them untill our meeting when we shall be prepared for an ample discussion of every thing. Mr. Bingham has got the deeds you sent on to Boston which General Jackson dispatched by another opportunity. My deeds which were sent you by the latter you will please to bring with you as I doubt not the needful formalities have been attended to agreeable to what I wrote concerning them. Before I have received them we can make up no power for you to sell, as the trust of the European share has never yet been executed. This is an object that will want deliberate consideration at our meeting, but can I believe be settled with less difficulty than we supposed at the time of our conversation concerning it at Gouldsboro'. We have determined nothing as to the lands of Jones, Jarvis or LaRoche but leave the subject till we see you when we shall have to determine the advantages to be derived from the acquisition of any of this property. Jarvis presses very hard, but I fear LaRoche's lands are not so easily come at owing to the pending question of Van Berckel's claim which remains in statu quo. I am ashamed to say I forgot in passing thro' New York to subscribe for the newspaper you desired and as you are now coming on it may as well be left untill you return.

I am ever with sincere esteem and regard

Dear sir,

Your very obedient servant

ALEXR. BARING

P.S. I left Mr. Hope at Boston, from whence he has since sailed for Lisbon. Pray remember me particularly to your son and family.

General Cobb

Bingham to Cobb, Lansdowne, 10 November 1797 [CP]

Lansdowne near Philadelphia November 10 1797
Dear General:

I have received your two letters, of the 23 September and 12 October,

the former from Castine and the latter from Gouldsborough, to the contents of which I should give you an ample and detailed reply, did I not flatter myself with the expectation of having a personal interview with you, when every essential point relative to the preferable mode of settling our lands may be freely and fully discussed.

As the period for Mr. Baring's departure from this country has nearly arrived, the parties in England who are interested in the purchase of the Maine Lands thought it expedient to appoint a person, in whose intelligence and integrity they could confide, to represent them, as partners in so valuable a property, on this side of the water. They have fortunately selected a character, known to, and esteemed by us all, whose temper is well suited to accommodation which is so necessary to meet the versatile views and dispositions of the first settlers in a young country.

As this gentleman is to be employed and paid by the English concern, it is the intention of Mr. Baring that he shall contribute, by every personal effort, to the promotion of the general interest, and for this purpose, that he shall establish himself in some district of the purchase, where he shall encourage and superintend the progress of a settlement.

What spot will be the most eligible, or what arrangement best calculated to insure the success of such an operation, is matter of future consideration, as we have not as yet digested any ideas on the subject.

But we wish to form a system in the establishment of which we expect considerable aid from the experience you have gained since your residence in that country.

The present is a dull season of the year, when all business of an active nature is arrested, and when no interests of the concern can, in our conception, suffer from your absence. At the same time we are persuaded that they may be essentially benefited by a free and detailed communication.

Mr. Richards was to take his passage immediately, which leads to the expectation of his speedy arrival. If therefore no peculiar circumstances should oppose our wishes, we are desirous of your commencing your journey as soon as convenient, and we wish you to prepare notes of all the most interesting points that are proper to occupy our attention.

In the enclosed letter you will find Mr. Baring's ideas upon many of your enquiries, and a desire expressed of reserving himself for a more accurate answer to them, untill the meditated meeting.

Perhaps you may find a vessel destined to New York, which will expose you to less fatigue and inconvenience than by the common route of the stages, thro Boston. I shall forward this letter to General Knox, to be

transmitted to you, by the post or by a water conveyance, as he may deem most expedient.

Mr. Baring wishes you to bring his deeds that have been recorded in your county. Those intended to have been sent by him, have since arrived.

I am with sincerity and regard

Dear General

Yours etc.

WM. BINGHAM

General Cobb

Gouldsbrough

As these last two letters indicate, by November Alexander Baring had completed his tour of the United States, had apparently had time to digest what he had observed, and was now back in Philadelphia ready to draw up a more precise program for the development of the Maine property. Two letters which he wrote to the Hopes in England in December, 1797, show that he had indeed made a thorough study of America and that he was probably as well informed on American lands and the problems attendant upon investment in them as anyone in either the United States or Europe.

Baring to Henry Hope, Philadelphia, 12 December 1797 [BaP]

Philadelphia 12 December 1797

My dear Sir,

There has been a very considerable chasm in my correspondence and I have received by the late arrivals and particularly by Mr. Richards, who got to this place about ten days since,² answers to my last letters. I have been constantly moving about on one bussiness or other and in con-

² Although, after the excursion to Maine, John Richards had decided not to accept the agency (see above, p. 791), he changed his mind after his return to England, when a firm he had been interested in went bankrupt. In July, 1797, he had several conferences with the Barings and the Hopes and emerged with the appointment as agent to represent the European partners in the management of the Maine property. Whatever John Richards may have really thought about the prospect of going to live in Maine, he put a good face on the business and set off for America determined to do his best. See Richards to Hope and Company, 27 March 1797, Henry Hope to Baring, 15 April 1797, Sir Francis Baring's opinion on the Richards agency, dated 26 July 1797, Henry Hope's statement on the Maine Lands for Richards, dated 5 August 1797, Hope and Company to Richards, London, 5 August 1797, and Richards to Hope and Company, 20 July and 6 August 1797. All these documents are in BaP.

sequence of the increased risk of captures at sea have determined to wait for the departure of the *William Penn* to write. I am just returned from Baltimore and fortunately still find that vessel here, owing to the ice in the river, but as the weather is mild, she will get to sea in a few days and I understand the letter bag intended to go by her has been sent to New York. Richards' accepting the agency gave me very great pleasure; he is in great spirits, very much pleased with every thing that has passed with you in London and disposed to carry through with activity and perseverance the arduous task he has engaged in. He appears pleased with his future situation, either really or from a predetermination to appear so and from what I know of his character, I think him likely to attach himself to his pursuit. It will gradually grow upon him when his mind gets busied with the plans and projects of a speculation, the detail management of which must present the most interesting and pleasing variety. The nature of your concern makes very considerable personal confidence in your agent indispensable and it is no small consolation to have got a person in whom it can be so safely reposed. I would in this respect prefer Richards to Williamson, with all his activity and particularly so to Wadsworth,³ of whom I have my doubts in consequence of his behaviour in England and what I heard of him in his own country. His object must have been to court your opinion merely for the purpose of selling some of his New York lands and I find he has succeeded to part with some in London considerably beyond their real value. As you know both characters I was pleased that you should be able to judge for yourselves without the bias of my opinion, and not less so at the result. All Americans that go to Europe to sell lands make up their speeches and character with hypocritical art, and from a general deficiency which certainly exists throughout this country of that nice honour which is not merely contented with being exactly within the pale of the law, those they meet with are not a match for them. Major J. you will recollect did not scruple to assure us upon his honor that we could not do better than buy our Maine lands at five shillings. An act like this has nothing disgraceful attached to it here and if he had succeeded he would have obtained the more respected reputation of an able negotiator.

I am very much pleased with the arrangement with Richards; the quantum of compensation and footing you place him on are exactly conformable to my ideas and I shall put them into execution with some little variations which local circumstances make necessary, upon which I shall

³ The Hopes had been considering James Wadsworth as a possible agent. See Henry Hope to Baring, 15 April 1797, in BaP.

not at present enlarge.⁴ Mr. Bingham has for some time been prepared for the probable arrival of Richards and is much pleased. We have both written to Cobb and Knox on the subject and I have no doubt it will give them equal satisfaction. The terms Richards is engaged on are kept a secret from the former to avoid jealousy and I have rather spoken of him as being above a common agent, that he may have a more preponderant sway, and in fact on my departure he must fill my place and decide in most instances in concert with Mr. Bingham, taking on himself both the legislative and executive branch in our share of administration. The power must be left with somebody and I know nobody more proper, for characters here would not only not take the trouble but are almost as ignorant of the nature of the concern as if they resided in Europe. Bingham will himself always prove a check, and as his character is disposed to caution and diffidence, I rather apprehend his falling short of than exceeding the requisite boldness and enterprize. From a thorough knowledge of this man's character I am persuaded none in this country could answer our views equally well if at all, but we can not expect to have found one modelled exactly to our own fancy. Great vanity and purse-pride are perceivable in all his actions; he is consequently not generally liked and attaches nobody, and from a narrowness of mind which naturally leads him to a want of confidence in every body, I have some difficulty to prevail on him to give that latitude of action to his agent which is indispensable. Cobb is for instance much more devoted to me than to him and frequently recurs to me to explain between them. As long as I am here I could manage B. without difficulty and from the high opinion he has of Richards, I am in hopes he will find him equally tractable. I have now all the materials before me to place our adventure on its proper and permanent footing to the immediate execution of which I am attending, though I shall not at present trouble you with details. Cobb is coming on here, as I can not prevail on Bingham to go a second time to Maine, and we shall then finally discuss and arrange every detail and settle the principles we must go on. I am desirous we should all meet that we may understand each other and leave nothing unsettled; also that Bingham may be aware of and concur in the expenses necessary for the improvement of our lands and that we may not suffer by a mistaken œconomy which for the purpose of saving trifles sacrifices the great object we are embarked on.

The objects we have to discuss are very numerous and I have been

⁴ According to arrangements made in England, Richards was to receive an annual salary of \$1,500 and the residuary profits on 50,000 acres of land. See Hope and Company to Richards, 5 August 1797, in BaP.

continually preparing by notes and observations as they occur and extracting such remarks from your side which are in point, as many of them are. Method and system are the great essentials and I shall in this respect derive very great assistance from Richards, who possesses both. Cobb does not,⁵ but he is a very good man of an active mind, both for real execution and eminently for puffing, which his great influence in New England enables him to do with more effect than any other person. Having now been through nearly the whole of the union and seen a vast variety of back settlements and new lands, I have collected information and experience which can not otherwise be acquired and we will endeavour as much as possible to immitate the good and avoid the blunders and follies I have been witness to. Untill now every thing that has been done has been merely preliminary and we must make up our plans de novo. The points that chiefly want discussion are: the situation of our agents, their relative powers and duties; the improvements to be put into execution and means to be employed to favor migration thither; mode of sales, prices and form of deeds; arangement of a regular finance system; plan of keeping accounts and books; and lastly to decide on what contiguous acquisitions we shall make, of which we have several offers before us. When this is done, Cobb will return to Maine and Richards will follow so as to be there very early in the spring. I shall afterwards have nothing further to do than to place the deeds that are now perfectly ready in the hands of trustees and close with Mr. Bingham the articles of association in this speculation between us, in which I want Richards' advice and assistance.

There are to be two trustees, Thomas M. Willing, eldest son of Mr. Willing and partner in the house of Willing and Francis, and William Cramond, only acting partner in the house of Philips Cramond. I have preferred these gentlemen because their characters are unexceptionable and respectable, both merchants, steady and cautious, and as they married sisters are better acquainted with each other and can act in concert in any steps it may be necessary for them to take.⁶ In point of security, I find myself equally easy as if you had the property in your own names and the declaration of trust will preclude all possibility of danger if it were not otherwise provided for by character. Young Mr. Willing is an exact copy of the father and I preferred him as a younger man and more

⁵ Bingham complained frequently of Cobb's accounting methods. For some examples of Cobb's arithmetic, see Appendix H.

⁶ The sisters mentioned were the daughters of John Nixon of Philadelphia. Thomas Mayne Willing married Jane Nixon; I have not been able to discover the first name of Cramond's wife. See E. L. Clark, *Record of Inscriptions . . . of Christ Church Philadelphia* (Philadelphia, 1864), 83.

pliant to the manners of the present world and consequently better adapted to act in concert with others. The articles with Bingham I have considerably shortened from what I first intended, contracting them so as to be concise and explicit on every event we can foresee. The fewer words the better and I trust the present good understanding betwixt the parties will not be interrupted. I can foresee no possible rational cause for it, our interests and views being exactly the same.

No decision has yet taken place on Mr. Bingham's petition relative to the upper tract and when it does, you will recollect we have the option of making up our decision. I shall confine myself certainly to what I have done excepting contiguous purchases which may be of advantage to us and particularly the Penobscot Indian lands, which we shall have an eye to when the state sells. The purchase of the Indians has already been made and persons appointed by the State of Massachusetts to examine and report the situation and nature of the lands. They have excited so much curiosity and attention that I fear they will sell for more than we shall chuse to give, especially as state sales are on a long credit and the speculative disposition of the people lead them to disregard distant engagements. No adequate allowance would be made to us for our ready money by government and it will not do to pay cash at the credit price. Where neighbouring lands are in a train of active improvement, it is not for our interest to monopolize, for we are as much benefited by their exertions as by our own. We all work in the same direction and I do not wish to melt down all proprietorships, that we may not stand alone the objects of public envy. I should have no objection to the townships on the sea shore to the east of Gouldsboro, but the proprietor is in prison and the title very foul. The good lots are also out of his hands and owned by actual settlers. The want of these townships is no disadvantage to us, but I should have no objection to them for the sake of compactness. I have no wish for the other half of Mount Desart; this island is the least productive or promising of all our property and contains twice the quantity of uncultivable acres of any other tract of similar extent; it is the highest land of the whole coast of North America and a great portion of it promises no produce to any body but the mineralogist, a character this part of Maine can have nothing to do with for some time. The low lands of Mount Desart are good, but the best are occupied; we have besides got the half opposite to the shore and forming the bay, which is all we want. I have, I believe, frequently explained that the whole coast of North America from the Bay of Fundy to New York is rock and from thence to the Floridas, sand. The sea shore townships of the former serving as a barrier for the conti-

ment against the sea are of course the poorest soil, which generally improves as you advance in the country untill you come to the mountains. In Maine the best sea shore townships are those within Mount Desart, say Sullivan, Trenton and No. 6 on Union River; we shall perhaps be able to acquire some small parcells there that may be serviceable. Above all what I want to buy up is the lottery claims, which are scattered through our tract; they can give us no great trouble, as they are all to be laid off by us according to well designated lines, but I should like to get rid of them and as they are floating on the market and could, many of them, be picked up cheap, I purpose getting Cobb to buy them up, as he knows how to set about it. In general a discretionary power will be left by me with Richards to concur with Bingham in any additional acquisitions they may think desirable, provided the motive is benefit of your present property and not an extension of it. I never contemplated any purchase of Knox's lands; they are valuable but perfectly distinct from ours.

I have resolved to make no further purchases for you either in Maine or elsewhere, as the result of mature deliberation and an experience ripening under the gradual rays of observation and reflection. I wish however to explain that this determination proceeds from no regret of what has been done. My opinion and expectations are unshaken and I remain persuaded that under proper management we can not fail of success; but I think the mass we have sufficient for our operation and large enough to absorb all our exertions. An additional tract would remain a long time before it could come in play and if after we have made greater progress we are desirous of extending our boundaries, we shall probably find occasion to do it. We shall also find one operation of this kind engages our attention sufficiently and the difficulty of procuring a second set of agents and other necessary concomitants is sufficient reason to confine ourselves to it. To buy on speculation for purposes of resale en masse in Europe, for which purpose the Kennebec lands are well adapted, is a precarious and uncertain prospect and if such a resale is possible, I could easily engage to procure them at any contracted price. To buy lands and let them remain unthought of, if in a new part of the country, I know from experience to be unproductive. Your property will on the contrary be perishing from encroachments and neglect. And lastly, though to persons residing in this country scattered landed property well selected may be very productive, as I know it is, yet it would be a bad speculation for persons at a distance who could not watch and avail of opportunities of favorable sale. These are my reasons for abiding by what has been done, which from the general tenor of your letters I conclude to be your wish also. We shall have one

object in operation which I am satisfied has advantages with respect to natural situation, abilities of agents and substance of principals to back them, beyond any that has been undertaken in this country. To that we will center all our attention and I assure you I feel no little solicitude both from the importance of the interest and pride at the part I have acted in the business that it should turn out what I have no doubt it will.

Bingham is constantly urging the Kennebec tract and I have never communicated to him my intention of making no further purchases, to keep up with him the habit of communicating confidentially with me as he always has done on the subject of his prospects and concerns for the sake of information. I believe he has nearly given up his hopes of Talon's making any thing in Italy, though he is still busy there and his talent for intrigue has been sufficiently evinced by the most infamous manner he has deceived DeSmeth and Condere⁷ in their Pennsylvania purchase, which has lately come to light in a confidential manner to me. I suspected always that he had deceived them, but had no conception it would have been to such an extent. He bought of Bingham 300,000 acres at 6/ Pennsylvania currency of 7/6 per dollar, making 240/M dollars, which he has made them pay for at 1½ dollars, amounting to 450/M dollars and in addition has bought the least valuable part of the lands. Either you or my father have a map of the Pennsylvania lands. Bingham divided them about in the middle by a line north and south and gave him his option of the east side at 6/ or west at a dollar. He took the cheaper and overcharged them 210,000 dollars. As a subject of curiosity I will state the terms of payment which are stipulated.

From DeSmeth and Co. to Talon		Talon to Bingham
Cash	\$100,000	\$80,000
31 December 1797	50,000	40,000
31 December 1798	50,000	40,000
31 December 1799	50,000	40,000
31 December 1800	50,000	40,000
31 December 1801	50,000	
31 December 1802	50,000	
31 December 1803	50,000	
	<hr/> \$450,000	<hr/> \$240,000

⁷ There is a Dutch banker named DeSmeth mentioned in J. B. Manger, *Recherches sur les Relations Economiques entre La France et La Hollande, etc.* 115. I have not been able to identify either Condere or the agent Hollinger mentioned immediately below. For more information on this sale, see Baring to Hope and Company, Philadelphia, 10 January 1797, in BaP.

It is the grossest imposition I ever heard of and I can not conceive how the Amsterdam gentlemen could have been duped by a man in whom I could never discover any thing plausible but his figure. Including the loss on the exchange on the first 100,000 dollars drawn for, they will suffer full £50,000 sterling for this ill placed confidence and get besides a body of lands so shut up by Bingham's unsettled tract that they can not operate by improvement on them untill he also commences, and from their situation always to great disadvantage. I understand however that Hollinger is coming out to superintend the settlement and that they are again trying what has so often failed, an importation of Germans, each of which will cost them more before they are settled on the land than they will ever get off from it in the first ten years. It has been tried repeatedly and Williamson was obliged to drive off his lands with the bayonet a party Sir William Pulteney sent him. Poor emigrants are always the idle refuse of the country they come from; indolence and ignorance drives them over, to disappointment here and though they have been the foundation of the population of this country, the first comers are only fit to make children for a future generation. I should rather suppose that DeSmeth and his associates can come to some terms with Talon if they get information of the manner he has treated them, which I believe they as yet have not. Bingham is mad, not that they have been cheated but that he did not share the spoil. The sale renders his . . .⁸ (page or pages missing).

. . . of the continent pleased him very much, especially the back parts of Virginia, Canada and Maine. The latter as a picturesque country he expressed himself very much pleased with and it certainly is beautiful. The islands on the coast, bays and rivers form a very fine scenery and more variety than any part of the American coast. As far as I could collect his opinion I believe he thinks perfectly with me on the subject of our speculation, and understands it; whether he expressed himself so with any idea of personality towards me you will be best able to judge. When we were in Maine, he was in a hurry to get to Boston and I regretted that I could not prevail upon him to explore some of the most promising parts of our tract. We landed at Gouldsboro', which is a dreary looking place, and from thence proceeded westward to Penobscot and General Knox's; but as we were in the Genisee and I always endeavoured to draw his attention to objects that were in point, he acquired all the requisite ingredients of a sound opinion, which

⁸ The letter breaks off here at the end of a page. Apparently one or more pages are missing. When the letter picks up again, Baring is describing Henry Philip Hope's impressions of America.

his own good judgement will easily enable him to compose.

I can not flatter myself that it was the happiest year of his life. He left in Europe what at our age once tasted we can hardly with good humour resign, for a country where there is a peculiar dearth of all the pleasures we are accustomed to look for. The state of society is perfectly unfit for a mind like his; it has no charms for the man of letters, taste or dissipation, nor is it even reconcilable to the less exigent propensities of what we understand by the mixed character of a gentleman. All conversations turn on speculations and money making and every body's education seems to have stopt short at the bare requisites for that purpose. The cause of this state of things is obvious; it is undoubtedly gradually ameliorating and as riches introduce luxuries, part will be bestowed on internal as well as external decorations. The society of large towns is certainly not engaging here, but though generally poor, my friend made some pleasant acquaintances and passed many agreeable hours. The New England states certainly rank much above the others in point of society and the country people are the best informed of probably any in the world; owing to their wise laws and municipal regulations, there are very few of the very lowest class that can not read and write and equality is not only visible in their government but in a most striking degree in the state of property and education.

I wrote you a letter from Albany on the subject of the Archbishop of York's lands, about which I had collected some information at New York.⁹ I have continued my enquiries and find every account I get corroborates what I then wrote; that part of the State of New York is little known or settled and I should advise leaving the property dormant for the present, particularly as the present fall of speculators renders it less valuable than it may be some time hence. Morris and Nicholson are both confined in their houses to escape arrest and Greenleaf is actually in prison and has made a vain attempt to get out by taking the benefit of the Pennsylvania Insolvent Act. They can none of them ever retrieve their affairs, which are not only desperate but unintelligibly complicated and entangled. Morris's large house, on which he is supposed to have squandered near 300/M dollars, sold a few days past at auction for the trifling sum of 46/M dollars, but I suspect some rascality, for the ground is worth the money. The building itself is incomplete and absurdly tasteless.

⁹ These may have been lands in Macomb's "Great Purchase" which Gouverneur Morris and William Constable were selling in Europe, though I have found no record of a sale to the Archbishop of York. There is no Baring letter from Albany in BaP.

14 December. The weather has again turned to frost and I am apprehensive the *Penn* will be detained some time, but as I this moment hear of a vessel to sail from New York, I shall close this letter and send it there and write to Mr. Williams Hope either by the *Penn*, if she gets out shortly or by the packet, which will sail from New York in about ten days. The means of conveyance are at present most distressingly uncertain and no vessels can hardly be relied on. This country is in a perfect political tranquility and will remain so. The people seem disposed to put up with all buffets and affronts and watch attentively the profits to be drawn by their enterprize and industry from the follies and dissensions of their neighbours. We wait anxiously the return of our three commissaries and with respect to England the frigates in the West Indies can convoy American vessels. Not only all enmity has subsided but the British officers are quite aux petites attentions in proportion as the French become insolent and reject the sister republic from their family. American stocks are very scarce and high, particularly Bank and 3 per cents; if they continue at the last quoted prices in London, they might be raised considerably by once sweeping the market, for none can go from here. I must take my leave at present, begging my most sincere and respectful regards to Mr. and Mrs. Williams Hope and the whole family.

Your ever devoted humble servant,

ALEXR. BARING

*Baring to John Williams Hope, Philadelphia,
31 December 1797 [BaP]*

Philadelphia 31 December 1797

My dear Sir,

I sent a long letter for Mr. Henry Hope by the *Mary* from New York, which ship sailed from thence the 27th. The river here continues closed and the *William Penn* will not get out till March. As the French detain almost all the American vessels they meet bound to England, the communication is become uncertain and the packets are as safe as any other vessels. I shall send the present for that conveyance. I have received all your kind favours as late as the 6th September¹ and am very much grati-

¹ The only letter in BaP from the Hopes to Baring during 1797 is one from Henry Hope dated 15 April 1797, in which he approves Baring's work and offers some pretty shrewd advice on the development of the purchase. He complains of William Jackson's "pompous account" of the lands and says he was led to believe there were roads separating the Maine townships, "instead of imaginary lines making one mass of almost impenetrable woods." "This is a piece with Mr. Williamson's fine street

fied by the satisfaction you express with every thing I have done; but still more so with the friendly and liberal manner both you and Mr. Henry Hope speak of my motives and intentions, which I lay claim to with more confidence than to any judgement, though I have not as yet been sensible of any self-conviction to the prejudice of the latter. The *exact* result of every enterprize in a country like this must be more or less speculative and though my opinion after full experience confirmed perfectly that which first prompted me to act, I know no persons but yourselves I would have taken upon me to proceed for in the manner I have done, from a conviction of the necessity of that candour and liberality which I have experienced.

I mentioned to Mr. H. Hope that Mr. Richards being arrived, we were immediately to proceed to fix our future plans, and I have this day a letter from General Cobb announcing his arrival in Boston and that we may daily expect him here. I have been preparing for him, to have every point well discussed and matured; all parties agree and appear animated with the proper spirit to proceed with activity. What I have chiefly to counteract is a backwardness on the part of Bingham to pecuniary exertions, but I do not think he will carry it far enough to injure us, and his disposition to close enquiry will preclude all apprehensions of extravagance. Richards is very much pleased with us and I with him. The prejudice to the species of life he has to lead he has nearly got the better of, and I am confident he will answer our purpose. I was very much pleased that you got rid of Wadsworth; when I am gone, it will be necessary to repose a personal confidence which I would by no means trust him with, nor indeed hardly any American; the most honest among them will speculate upon you under some plausible pretext and though it may appear to a person not acquainted with the country hasty and illiberal to brand a whole nation, there is certainly a want of that nice sense of honour which no little meannesses can approach and which I am persuaded is posset [sic] in the highest degree by our friend Richards.

I have been moving about pretty constantly since my first arrival in this country and particularly since that of Mr. H. P. Hope. We have been visiting every thing worth seeing from north to south, seen back lands and new settlements of all kinds and have of course been attentive to collect that information which can assist us in our speculation. I will not

in Geneva, to which nothing was wanting but houses." He opines that a lifetime of work and the resources of the Bank of England would be necessary to cut all the roads. Despite these handicaps, he is sanguine about the future prospects of the speculation.

trouble you with any uninteresting details of our tour, which may serve for conversation hereafter. The natural beauties of so extensive a country must be great and varied but in particular every part has an extraordinary appearance, perfectly novel to an European, of increasing population and settlements. The back woods from Florida to Maine present a repeated scene of new clearings and log huts; forests some years past totally unvisited falling, and farms scattering through them; and one would be induced to believe from the appearance of every individual tract of back country that the whole surplus population of the continent was forcing itself backwards in that particular spot. A country in that state presents generally nothing pleasing to the eye; the sight is for the most part uncouth, but it affords a vast fund of curious reflection and speculation, both natural and political, to the traveller who receives pleasure through any other sense. The gradual progress of population backwards from the Atlantic towards the Mississippi is regular and nothing can stop it. It must on the contrary increase in an increased ratio with the population itself. Upon this hypothesis it is that all speculation in unsettled land is founded and it can never be overset as long as laws preserve property, people continue to populate and agricultural produce is sufficiently valuable to maintain the cultivator and leave a surplus to the landowner.

The back countries of Georgia are settling very fast and absorb the chief part of the emigration from the settled parts of South and North Carolina. Cotton has become a very valuable staple to that country and thrives remarkably well. The overflowings of Virginia and Maryland turn chiefly to Kentucky and Tenisee, which are growing to very great importance, and from the immense fertility of soil on the waters of the Ohio, a great portion of the Pennsylvania, New York and New England emigrants go the same way. The existence of slavery in the southern states produces an inconceivable relaxation of morals and industry which affects very much all their new settlements, which are consequently much more lawless and ungovernable than all others untill their character grows again, as the country becomes rich. The southern back settlements must ultimately depend on the complete opening of the Mississippi and free trade from New Orleans, which must be effected by the total expulsion of the Spaniards from that part of Louisiana and Florida. The militia from Kentucky would drive them out in one campaign and certainly will upon the first political dissention between the two countries. This event, when it takes place, will open a perfectly new scene in this part of the world which will then display riches and resources now little thought of.

The country exhibiting the most extraordinary growth is certainly the

back parts of New York and more particularly the Genisee, which is the school for the art of settling large tracts. Mr. Hope and myself went up the North River to Albany and from thence along the Mohawk 100 miles to Fort Stanwix. The borders of the Mohawk have been long settled by the Dutch and are very rich and valuable. From Fort Stanwix, the new country begins. We passed what are called the Military Townships² about 100 miles to Geneva, which is the first place in the Genisee. The Military Townships are a very fine body of land and improving fast; I think them full equal to the average of Williamson's tract and they only want good management and clear titles (which they are very deficient in) to be worth the same price. The roads through this country, which is the great entrance to the Genisee, are most abominable, but Williamson by his activity has got the people to improve them and the state to assist them with a sum of money. He has established a stage to Geneva, but it must be a very losing enterprize. Geneva is a larger place than I expected and situated very pleasantly on the borders of Seneca Lake. The place is not entirely of W's making, but he has improved it much, though I fear not much to his benefit, as it is rather out of the way of the bulk of his lands. The inn was a very good one and answered his account of it. I here left Mr. Hope, who was very much fatigued, to cross 25 miles to Genisee River, where I met him after making a tour of 150 through Williamson's lands. I first proceeded to Bath, about 50 miles—lands tolerably good untill I came within 10 miles of the place, where and all round Bath they are very poor. Bath has about 100 houses but most of them belong to Williamson and the whole place appears to depend on his residence there. It is on a river of which the navigation must be very difficult. I spent two days with Williamson, who was very communicative and shewed me all his arrangements and proceedings, and afterwards rode with me to Williamsburg on the Genisee, about 60 miles, and from thence to Hartford on the Genisee, about 20 miles more, where we met Mr. H. P. Hope, whom Thomas Morris (a son of Robert Morris who lives in the Genisee) had accompanied from Geneva. The land between Bath and the river was partly very good, but some tracts indifferent; but the flats on the river are wonderfully fine. I rode over five miles extent of river flats where the grass of the natural meadow was over my horse's head, but the greatest part of this land does not belong to Pulteney; it has lately been purchased from the Indians. This land is much to[o] rich for any grain but admirably suited for Indian corn or hemp; it is certain-

² In 1782 the State of New York had set aside a tract for veterans southwest of, and bordering on the Oswego River.

ly superior to the Mohawk flats, but it forms a very inconsiderable portion of the country which has acquired a general reputation from it. I do not suppose there are above 100,000 acres of this land in all and settlers, though seduced into the country by it, are obliged to take upland, which is not better than good average quality. In a large tract of this kind, there must of course be a vast variety of soil, which considered agregately is equal in quality to perhaps any tract of similar extent on the eastern waters of this continent. Williamsburg is a poor place and in a decaying state. A few miles from it Wadsworth's brother³ has a neat establishment and owns valuable property in the neighbourhood. Mr. Hope gave a very handsome account of the 25 miles of country he came through, which is the best settled and oldest settled part of the Genesee.

Upon the whole I was rather disappointed with the state of improvements of the farms in this country, which does not answer to the high price the people pay for their lands. Our settlements in Maine really look better and more comfortable, owing to the advantage of deriving supplies by sea of little comforts the others know nothing of. Their houses are chiefly log, ours are frame or at least a much greater proportion of them. I am upon the whole thoroughly convinced that the great success has been more owing to the activity of the man than to any superior natural advantages of the country. It has nothing to recommend it but soil, for the climate is not healthy and it is totally defective with respect to communication, which is of the very greatest importance. The chief communication is with the Mohawk and North River, but every thing Williamson gets to Bath costs near 50 per cent in additional expenses and as to the conveyance of any bulky agricultural produce to market, it will be utterly impossible. In Maine on the contrary our communication is so easy that we can even offer to send firewood to Boston. This inconvenience is not felt so much at present in the Genesee because in all fast settling countries the new settlers consume all the produce of the old and flour is at present dearer at Bath than at New York. But when the country is fuller, they must find an external vent for their produce or it will be worth nothing.

I have collected a mass of information from Williamson which I would not have missed on any account; his operations exhibit [*sic*] much that will be worthy of imitation, as well as shoals to avoid, which he is now perfectly aware of, but which required previous sounding to ascertain and we shall certainly follow his leading operations as much as the difference

³ William Wadsworth. See N. A. McNall, *An Agricultural History of the Genesee Valley, 1790-1860* (Philadelphia, 1952), *passim*.

of our local situation will permit. I conceive him to have been too profuse in expences in many instances and I rather think he now injures the settlement of his land by asking too high a price. He has sold to the amount of £1,200/M New York currency, but he does not appear to keep sufficiently in view that his purchasers contribute nothing but their labor to pay him and that the money must be raised from the land. Two very essential points are fully established in my mind from Williamson's operations: first, that you can fix your own price for your land as you please after the first commencement of active operations; and secondly, that there will never be a want of applicants if you take care to provide them with such necessities as are indispensable for new settlers, for it is impossible for any person to labour in both respects under more pointed inconveniences and disadvantages. I do not much like the character of Williamson's settlers; they appear generally a sad medley of ragamuffins and he has certainly gone upon a bad plan of not paying some attention to their morals. There is not a church in the country, which is a much better *censor morum* than a jail and indeed the only cement of a society so far distant from the lash of the law. The consequence is that in several instances the bayonet code has been necessary and the Bath militia, who were paraded on my arrival, though not on the occasion, make a very terrific martial appearance. I should say however that Williamson has made himself liked in the country by assisting whenever he was able; by this means interest is the chief binder. In Maine we may equally have this advantage with the more permanent one of black coats and pulpits. Cobb rather complains of these itinerants being troublesome, but fanaticism is natural to new countries and whatever their creeds may be, they all preach proper principles of *meum* and *tuum*, which is all we want.⁴

I have had some correspondence with Williamson and inclose two of his last letters. What the nature of his disagreement with Pulteney is I do not exactly know, but I rather apprehend he has drawn heavily and has not been exactly regular in his speculations.⁵ It was thought in New York that he had bought the Baronet out and not very honestly. You will

⁴ Baring's account of the Genesee lands should be compared with the many other contemporary descriptions extant. See N. A. McNall, *An Agricultural History of the Genesee Valley*, especially Chapter V, which contains an account of the settlement of this area, and 258-260, which contains a bibliography of journals and travels.

⁵ The main cause of this difficulty was the proprietors' unwillingness to continue pouring money down a rat hole. By 1800 they had spent almost one and a half million dollars and had received back a little under \$148,000. See P. D. Evans, "The Pulteney Purchase," *New York State Historical Association Quarterly Journal*, III, 90.

see he wants me to make some representations to him, but upon what subject I do not know. I have dwelt thus much upon the subject of the Genisee because it has been so much discussed and talked of. I am aware of the danger of giving too ardent opinions and expectations and of drawing comparisons where the public ideas in general at the present moment differ so much from mine, but I can assure you that I am firmly persuaded that our tract in Maine is in every respect more intrinsically valuable than that of the Genisee and more susceptible of future improvements; indeed I am convinced that it has superior advantages to any large body of unsettled land in America and that we must inevitably succeed if any success can be expected from similar operations. I have formed this opinion from more minute and particular investigation and experience than I could possibly have when I made the purchase and though you may from your own opinion doubts its merits, I am persuaded you will not its sincerity.

From Hartford on the Genisee we rode through a wilderness of 80 miles to Buffaloe creek on Lake Erie. This is Morris's Genisee land, of which the chief part belongs to the Dutch Companies. It has last autumn been purchased of the Indians for 100,000 dollars for about three million of acres, forming the whole of that neck of land between the lakes from Pulteney's western line, which runs nearly along the Genisee and the northern line of Pennsylvania.⁶ This is a very important circumstance for that country and it is the largest sum of money ever given at a time to Indians for land. The Six Nations were the proprietors and have made some few reserves for several of their chiefs, which are not material. The Dutch can now commence their operations and you will perceive from Williamson's letters that they intend it. I do not think they will be very active, but rather from a diversity of interests and want of confidence in agents that they will make little of this otherwise valuable property. Cazenove with a great deal of cabinet knowledge has no practical talents for this bussiness and the man who has been sent out to succeed him, a Mr. Busti,⁷ does not understand English and appears altogether the most perfect ignoramus they could have chosen. I presume they will rely on directions from home and it is perfectly impossible any person who has not seen this country can understand it or direct to any good effect. There is not at present a house the whole 80 miles and we passed here one night under a tree. The lands are good and I should suppose averaging nearly the same quality as Williamson's, excepting that they have no Genisee

⁶ This was the Big Tree Treaty. See P. D. Evans, *The Holland Land Company*, 188-192.

⁷ Paul Busti. See P. D. Evans, *Holland Land Company*, 44 and note.

flats. There are very large plains called Buffaloe plains as you approach the great lake; part of these are poor lands but some good and they will be valuable by saving first settlers the trouble of clearing. American back lands are always thick wooded with some timber or other, but as you approach the Mississippi these large plains increase and are frequently a *perte de vue*, now and then a point of wood appearing like the appearance of land at sea. The roads or rather the path, for there is but one, is at present very bad excepting over the plains. There are immense swamps and I doubt if they can ever be made tolerably passable. In general good lands, being fat and clay, makes the worst roads and particularly in this country, where on account of its flatness you can not carry it along dry ridges which you every where else find. These woods are infested with musketoes and insects which torment the white people beyond any thing you can have an idea of. I should also think it will prove unhealthy and more so than Williamson's tract, from which people begin to emigrate on that account. The lake waters there begin to have the same effect the water in parts of Switzerland has of producing a species of excrescence from the throat.

From Buffaloe creek we crossed the St. Lawrence into Upper Canada and proceeded to Niagara. The province of Upper Canada has improved very much since the American Revolution under Simcoe's government. He has had an administration to back him in expences and lands to give away. The task was not difficult and perhaps no part of the continent has settled faster. Settlements are however confined to the neighbourhood of the lakes and St. Lawrence and do not go far back. All the good lands are already granted but from the circumstance of their having been originally given for nothing, they do not bear a proportioned value to the settlement of the country. The whole of Upper Canada, though completely intersected by mediteranean fresh water lakes is as well as the Genisee beyond the reach of any sea port market and must like Switzerland subsist from its own resources in ordinary times. This province as well as Lower Canada is a perfect dead weight to Great Britain. The settlers affect no attachment to the mother country; the attractions to them were cheap lands and no taxes and as long as Great Britain pleases to be at the expence of their government, without its proving any inconvenience to them, they will be satisfied; but when their interest varies, the same scene will be played over which we witnessed in these states, with the only difference that the contest will be much shorter. After viewing the falls of Niagara, which are grand beyond all description, we crossed Lake Ontario to Kingston and descended the St. Lawrence to Montreal and Que-

bec. From Lake Ontario downwards the inhabitants are all French Canadians, with a few English in the towns; the country fine and very well settled in a narrow strip on each side the river. The people are ignorant and disaffected to the English, to whom the whole of these provinces is a perfect burthen; when conquered they were usefull and indispensable to a peaceful possession of these states, of which they form the boundary; but since the loss of the latter they are of no service but to the empty vanity of large territorial possessions and increase ministerial patronage at the expence of the nation. The trade of Canada is principally in furs, which they get from the Indians in return for British manufactures and chiefly carried on from Montreal. I consider it insignificant in a national point of view and it is mostly confined to a few individuals who monopolize it.

From Quebec we proceeded down to Kamouraska,⁸ where we again entered the woods and traversed a portage of 45 miles, which brought us to the Lake Timiskuenta leading through the river Madawaska into the St. John. Owing to bad weather and the necessity of having our baggage carried by men, we were three nights in the woods. At the mouth of Madawaska there is a settlement on St. John's, distant altogether about 100 miles from the last settlements we left in Canada. It is yet undetermined whether this settlement does not belong to Maine when the real St. Croix River is ascertained. I rather think it does and that it will fall within Bingham's upper tract, through a considerable part of which we passed.⁹ I think the St. John's the finest river in North America for navigation. We descended it about four hundred miles in canoes with only one portage at the great falls of half a mile, and in general the lands on the river average finer than the borders of any river I know. 90 miles from the river mouth at St. John's is Fredericktown, the capital of New Brunswick, a new town beautifully situated and from 50 miles above it to St. John's, settlements are very thick and increasing. I was very much pleased to find good crops and fine farms at least two or three degrees north of Gouldsboro and that in an interior country, which would have quieted my fears if I ever had any about our climate. At the settlement of Madawaska I saw summer wheat producing 25 bushel the acre among stumps and ill cleared land. That country wants nothing but a market for its produce, but from its situation is confined to that of St. John's. This would be my principal objection to the upper Penobscot tract; the produce of American lands would be obliged to be sent to a British port, which will prove very in-

⁸ Kamouraska is about halfway between Quebec and Riviere du Loup.

⁹ The final disposition of this territory was, of course, to be negotiated by Baring himself some forty-five years later.

convenient. The question of boundary is deferred to next June, when a decision is expected. I have no doubt it will be the eastern branch of our Schoodic.

From St. John's we sailed to Passamaquoddy and from thence to Gouldsboro'. I regretted very much that Mr. H.P.H. had not time to visit the Schoodic and the country between that and Gouldsboro'. We shewed him the neighbourhood of the latter place, which is by far the least promising in appearance of any part of our tract, indeed so much so that we have our doubts whether we should not remove our capital elsewhere. Gouldsboro' has advantages of goodness of harbour and central situation beyond any other place, but its ragged appearance is a serious objection in a country where we want principally to introduce farmers. From Gouldsboro' we proceeded through the narrows of Mount Desert to the top of Bluehill Bay by water. There is here a remarkably neat little village chiefly of farmers and the lands are good. I had never been here before, nor at Castine, the capital on Penobscot, to which place we went on horseback. The country between is rocky but there are good farms. Castine is a very good harbour and likely to become the seat of the Penobscot trade. There is already a good deal of shipping owned there and about one hundred houses, some of which are very handsome. It has peculiarly the advantage of some pleasant society and sensible people with whom I was very much pleased, and I was altogether with the place, which far exceeded our expectations. I wished very much to have gone up the Penobscot, but we were obliged to cross the bay to Long Island, where we slept, and from thence to General Knox's. I found the country round him very much improved. He had nearly settled with his squatters and was selling lands at 5, 6, and 7 dollars the acre.

We went this time by land from St. Georges and were very much pleased with the country between that and Portland. It is almost as well settled as any part of New England and with very little improvement, a good carriage road could be made all the way to Penobscot. It is at present far superior to any of the avenues to the Genisee and a stage is established to within 35 miles of the General. I believe Mr. H. P. Hope was much pleased with Maine; the scenery of the country, though it has nothing to do with the speculative value of it, is very fine, and we are apt to have our opinions biassed by the gratification of our senses. I also think we agreed pretty well on the subject of the speculation, on which he made many very good and judicious remarks and seemed perfectly au fait of the nature of it. This country is not generally a pleasant or interesting one for any person who does not enter into the habits and ideas of

the people nor understand the exact point of information to look for. No refinement must be looked for; one must talk about money and lands and hear every body's story of his good and bad speculations; and though the scenery of the country is fine and in many instances grand beyond conception, travelling is fatiguing and difficult and for a few moments pleasure you are generally obliged to traverse many days journey of uninteresting country. I should advise very few people to come here for their amusement, though I must say I have had my curiosity gratified and have collected in the two years I have spent in the country what I should be loath to part with for the acquisition of any other four of my life.

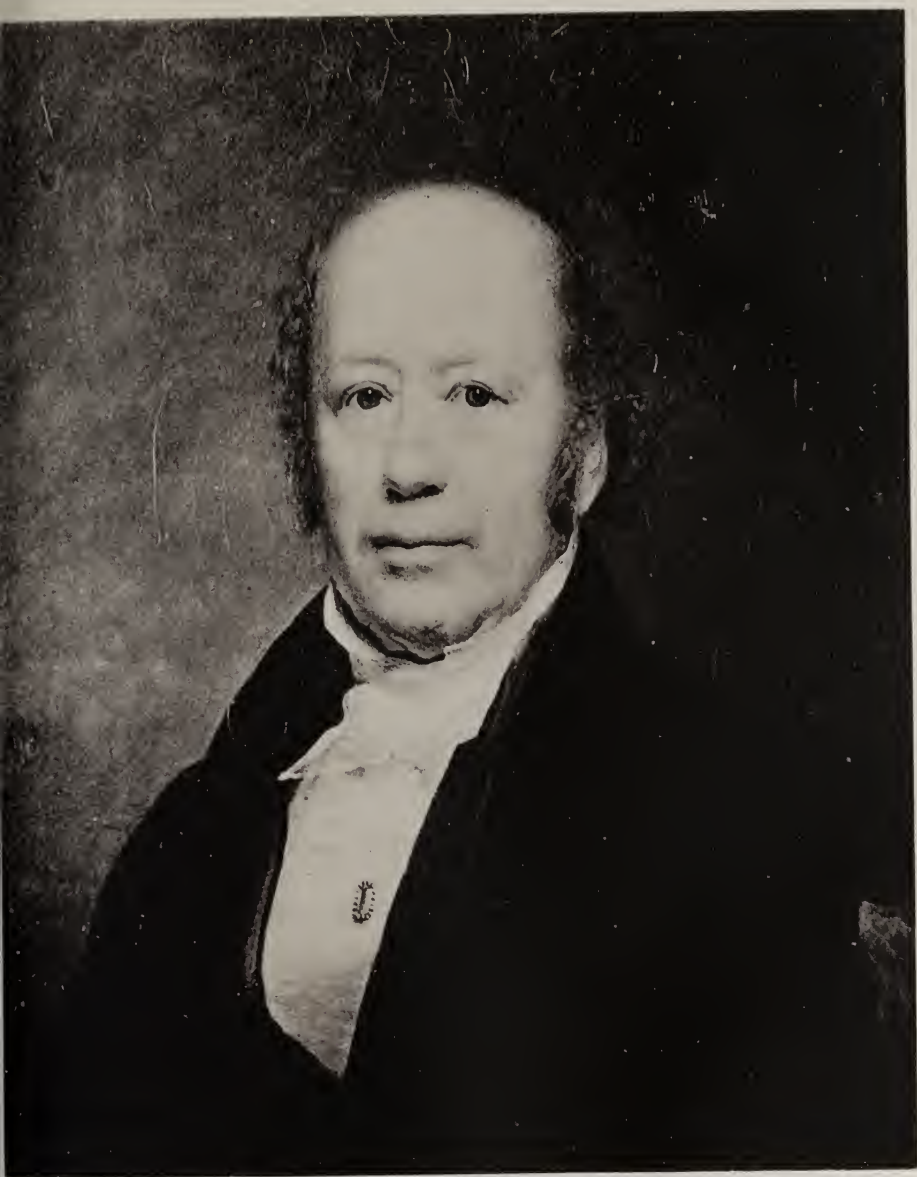
I shall say nothing at present about our plans of proceeding in Maine, but when we have dismissed Cobb, shall send you the details. I have got my deeds recorded from Maine and shall bring home with me on my return regular attested copies of them, together with the original declaration of trust.

I have placed young Black in Willing and Francis counting house to keep him employed for the present and they speak very highly of him.¹ He appears a very steady good young man and will I dare say be usefull to Richards, with whom he will go. He writes a good hand and may superintend the countinghouse work with a little instruction. I would however hint that he will be a considerable expence to you, having already disbursed near 300 dollars for him. I would therefore not send out any other persons of this description, for though we may hereafter want them, such characters are easily found here and at less expence. If Black behaves well we may be able to place him very comfortably some time hence.

I wrote to Mr. H.H. how scandalously DeSmeth and his companions had been taken in. I since find Talon has continued his negotiations with them and am told they have contracted to give him 10/ Pennsylvania per acre for the remaining 100,000 of Bingham's lands in this state, which the latter has promised Talon at 7/6, or one dollar. I could have got any part of this land for 5/ and could still if they were to drop the bargain. How Talon has explained away his conduct I don't understand, for I find they accepted his bills under protest for honor of the drawer here, R. Gilmor [?]² and Company. These lands did not cost Bingham 1/ the acre and he will realize an immense fortune. All the people in this country who did not speculate beyond their means and who have been able to keep their lands untill they were called for, have been successful.

¹ This is, I believe, the earliest reference to John Black's residence in this country.

² Robert Gilmor of Baltimore was a partner of Bingham's in many commercial enterprises.



Colonel John Black of Ellsworth, Maine
Successor to his father-in-law, General Cobb, as
Agent for the Bingham Property in Maine
Portrait by an unknown artist



Those only have been ruined who for years have been obliged to satisfy their engagements by raising money at 50 per cent per annum and consequently have finished by being obliged to sacrifice their property. Morris, Nicholson and Greenleaf are of this description. The first, who is the only man of any head—and he is a very extraordinary one—begins at last to see what he can not retrieve himself and I believe will give up his property to his creditors for a discharge shortly. One of the partners of LeRoy's house of New York is here for the purpose of securing a debt from him to the Amsterdam houses of 130,000 dollars; and talks of advancing 100/M dollars more to get security of some lands in the neighbourhood of this town and of his house in town (the sale of which was fictitious as I expected) in the same manner I covered Soderström's debt some time past.³ I do not conceive the property any thing like a security for the money and shall see if I can not contrive to get them to take our Pennsylvania lands and pay our claim, which would afford a much greater prospect of surplus for security. I can not act directly on the business or I might otherwise thwart it, but shall contrive to put it in their way. If we do not make some arrangement, we shall be obliged to take these lands and though I consider them worth much more, I would rather liquidate. You are perfectly right in your opinion about Edward Mott's application; we have nothing to do with it at present. I have seen him since his return and referred him to Morris, telling him that I will make him deeds for any lands he agrees with Mr. M. for, provided the price is paid or secured to me. I have not seen Morris this long time; he is shut up in a house a few miles out of town and keeps close to avoid arrest. Bankrupt laws are very defective all over the continent or rather there exist none and the consequence is that the most scandalous frauds and partiality is practised. It has been repeatedly before Congress and at this moment a Committee is sitting on the subject, but the interest and customs of the states clash so much that no favorable issue is expected and the State of Pennsylvania will probably enact one for itself, untill the general government, to whom this power is reserved by the constitution, can agree.

Benjamin Vaughan is gone to live on the Kennebeck in Maine and is highly delighted with the country. He is talked of as a very busy man.

³ There is an account of this transaction in Baring to Hope and Company, 10 January 1797, in BaP. Soderstrom, who apparently at one time was connected with either the Hopes or the Barings, had become indebted to Robert Morris, and the Hopes stood to lose if he were unable to pay. Baring agreed to loan Morris enough money to repay the debt and some more in addition, and took close to 100,000 acres of land in New York and Pennsylvania as security for repayment by Morris.

Characters of this kind are usefull to the country for they understand the art of puffing, if nothing else. His brother Charles at Boston and John here are both and particularly the latter, much distressed in their business.⁴

Your letter about some small claims on some people here came to hand a few days previous to Richards' arrival. I shall attend to them and write you shortly. The only two of any consequence are McNeil and Wilcocks;⁵ about the former I have written to Codman; the latter is dead and though his estate is thought to be good, it is embarassed. The house of J. and F.B. and Co. have a larger claim on them and I shall attend to both. I have never been able to meet young Wollaston,⁶ who left me your letter of introduction. I was on the south when he called here and on my return he was gone to Boston. He however succeeded in his mission and I recommended him to the Secretary of State as a proper person; being now very well acquainted with all the heads of the departments of government, my recommendation in cases of this nature would be attended to. I have looked over the West India papers and think with you that a personal visit to the islands could alone settle our heavy dependence with Runnels. If peace takes place, upon which I can form no calculation, I shall certainly go out. I have no apprehension of climate; the only obstacle at present is the stoppage of communication between the different colonies. I shall say no more on this subject untill I am able to do something.

This country continues undisturbed by the tempest that agitates so seriously every other and more likely to remain so than ever. The present administration is timid and passive; Adams is inclined to follow the footsteps of his predecessor and excite as little notice as possible; the people throughout are satisfied and easy; that spirit of enthusiasm in favor of the French cause, the fatal effects of which was with difficulty stemmed by Washington, has subsided and indeed almost reversed in consequence of the late conduct of France. The change of public opinion is wonderful and there is now no danger of a relapse. The character of Americans leads them to cool calculation in politics and the plea of national honour is seldom urged by the most visionary. The preservation of neutrality is in consequence duly appreciated and will be pursued if possible. We are still without advice of the works of our missioners at Paris; any cringing humiliation is disregarded and the result will alone be looked to. Any

⁴ On the Vaughans, see R. H. Gardiner, *Early Recollections*, 119-130.

⁵ Alexander Wilcocks was Recorder of the city and had acted as Baring's lawyer on several occasions. I have not been able to identify McNeil.

⁶ I have not been able to identify Wollaston.

thing short of France persisting in taking their vessels or insisting on a rupture of the British treaty will answer. I think the French will not risk war, both from the unpopularity of it with the people and the accession of strength it would give their enemy in the islands. Talleyrand understands this country perfectly and knows how far he can go; his opinion will probably lead the Directory. The trade of America will never be perfectly secure without a navy; with a very small one they can publish their edition of the laws of nations and without it they must constantly be the dupes of diplomatic sophisms. Half a dozen ships of the line would in time of war enable them to decide the fate of the West Indies and of this the people begin to be aware, but it is too late for the present contest. West India vessels continue to be captured, though we are daily amused with new edicts of the French proconsuls in the different islands, some more and some less favorable.

This place has been extremely unfortunate; the yellow fever raged three months and carried off about 1,000 persons, making about every 30th of the population at that time. 4,000 persons were altogether attacked so that every fourth escaped. Three weeks after the cessation of this pestilence the frost shut us up and there is in consequence an immense quantity of produce in the river bound up. New York and Baltimore are still open, which must give them very great advantage in bussiness. The finances go on well, as you will observe from the inclosed report by the Secretary of the Treasury. Stocks are scarce and much demanded; the Bank dividend for the half year has been declared 5 per cent, instead of 4 per cent; the additional 1 per cent is surplus proffit which the Bank by its charter is at certain periods obliged to divide and can not be hereafter depended on. Money is much more plenty than it has been, owing to the fall of the great speculators, who have long been in the habit of paying exorbitant interest and the banks hardly get sufficient good paper to discount. Bank discounts are very ill managed and the object of them for the facility of trade is totally misunderstood throughout the continent. I was very much pleased by the family account I got from Mr. Richards, both in Cavendish and Devonshire Squares,⁷ by which I conclude the air of England and partial relaxation from bussiness must have been of service. An occasional return of your old visitor, if not too violent, is no bad symptom. In particular the account of the addition to your nursery and of course to your happiness gave me great pleasure and I beg my congratulations with the usual tribute of my respectful regard may be pre-

⁷ The London residence of the Hopes was in Cavendish Square; that of the Barings in Devonshire Square.

sented to Mrs. Hope. Pray believe me, my dear Sir, ever with invariable attachment,

Your most devoted humble servant
ALEXR. BARING

Finally, after a season of inactivity and uncertainty, General Cobb received a summons to proceed to Philadelphia, there to confer with Bingham, Baring, and John Richards, the man who was to represent the European partners in the concern as agent in the field, and who from now on was to work very closely with Cobb. The General sailed from Prospect Harbor, in the township of Gouldsborough, on 9 December, and six days later, after a typically stormy winter passage, arrived at Portland in a blizzard. Since the stage for Boston did not leave until Monday, 18 December, Cobb passed the week end with Daniel Davis, a friend of Knox's and one of the leading lawyers of the town. By Wednesday night Bingham's agent was in Boston, where he spent the rest of the week enjoying the company of his old friends Knox and Jeffrey. On Christmas Day, 1797, in company with Mrs. Judge Wilson, he set off in the slow stage for New York, a journey which included crossing the Connecticut River on the ice and the Stratford ferry in a canoe; and on New Year's Eve he was in Philadelphia, ready to act as advocate for a more active promotion of the Maine Lands.⁸

⁸ For Cobb's itinerary see the short diary in CP covering this trip to Philadelphia. The announcement of his departure with Mrs. Wilson is in Knox to Bingham, Boston, 25 December 1797 in BP. There is an extensive correspondence between Knox and Daniel Davis in KP.

Chapter XIII

1798-1799

THE year 1798 started off auspiciously for the Bingham speculation in Maine Lands. Alexander Baring was at last willing to draw up a definitive program for the development of the property, and a large-scale operation was apparently in the making. Early in January, Bingham, Baring, Cobb and Richards met in Philadelphia for what must have been prolonged discussions as to the best mode of advancing the Maine Lands. Knox was apparently not even invited; he was simply told what had been decided upon once the conference was over.¹ To judge by his own account of this council of war, Baring assumed charge of the discussions and by humoring Bingham on small matters succeeded in getting his own way when it came to the really important decisions. In any event, by February a long and detailed plan of operations had been drawn up,² and soon after its completion Cobb, Richards, and Baring set off for Boston to put the first part of the program into execution.

This promising start was soon marred by a quarrel between Cobb and Bingham which developed out of an attempt on Cobb's part to draw on Bingham for \$1,000 as an advance on his annual salary. Bingham, weighed down by the heavy expenses of the new program—some \$9,000 was expended by the agents in Boston prior to their departure down east—refused to accept the draft, and Cobb, in what Henry Jackson called a "mutiny," refused to communicate with his employer for the remainder of 1798. This quarrel was eventually settled by Bingham's backing down,³ but the absence of any letters between Bingham and Cobb

¹ There is a brief memorandum in KP, xli. 66, which indicates how little Knox knew of what was going on. In it he wonders what T. M. Willing and W. Crammond have to do with the business, showing that he had not been told of the trustee arrangement.

² Baring's account of the discussions is printed below, pp. 915-916; the plan of operations below, pp. 919-935.

³ See H. Jackson to Cobb, Dorchester, 30 August 1798, in CP, printed below, pp. 941-943.

from May to December, 1798, obscures what was actually going on in Maine. Bills and accounts in the Cobb Papers show that the schooner *Betsy and Polly* was purchased for \$2,500 in April,⁴ that a large number of workmen were actually employed in the construction of roads and houses during the summer, and that a fairly elaborate store was opened at Gouldsbrough. It is not until 1799, when Cobb stopped sulking in his tent and began to report to Bingham again, that a detailed account of the progress of the new program becomes available.

Bingham and Knox continued to correspond regularly during 1798, but, as in the preceding year, their letters are for the most appeals from Bingham to Knox to pay his debts, and the latter's evasive replies. If he could but sell fifty or sixty thousand acres of land in the Waldo Patent, Knox wrote, it would "render my heart as light as an humming bird";⁵ or again, "My cup of credit is full. I may with a steady hand carry that which I now have, but any additional quantity would make it overflow."⁶ As if he did not already have enough irons in the fire, the ever-optimistic General tried to get a contract to build two frigates at Thomaston for the federal government.⁷ When it came to paying his debts, however, Henry Knox proved a broken reed. Despite Bingham's announcement that Alexander Baring was about to leave for Europe and would have to be paid, Knox did nothing but beg for time;⁸ and when, as a last resort, Baring drew on Knox for the amount due, the General simply returned the draft unpaid.⁹

This year marks, to all intents and purposes, the exit of Henry Knox from the concern. There is an occasional exchange of letters between him and Bingham and him and Cobb in the next few years, but apparently the business men in Philadelphia considered the old soldier no longer worth bothering about. Knox was

⁴ The bill of sale for this schooner, dated Boston, 20 April 1798, is in CP.

⁵ See Knox to Bingham, Boston, 24 August 1798, in BP.

⁶ See Knox to Bingham, Boston, 3 December 1797, in BP.

⁷ See Knox to Bingham, Boston, 21 May 1798, in BP.

⁸ See Bingham to Knox, Philadelphia, 13 May 1798, KP, xli. 108, and Knox to Bingham, Boston, 4 and 27 June 1798, in BP.

⁹ See Bingham to Knox, Bellevue, Black Point, 7 August 1798, in BP. (Letter book copy.)

never, to the day of his death, able to pay his debt to Baring, not to mention some \$40,000 he owed Bingham and his share in the expenses incurred in the development of the lands. It seems clear that Bingham, as a counter signatory of Knox's note, had to pay Baring;¹ in any event, shortly before he died, the General came to an agreement with the Bingham Trustees whereby all his debts to Bingham were cancelled in return for the relinquishment by him of any claim to the one third of the residuary profits on the Maine Lands to which he was entitled by his original agreement with Bingham.² For all his optimism, good humor, and genuine friendliness, Henry Knox was so totally and tragically irresponsible in money matters that he proved but another burden for the Maine speculation to bear.

Another reason why Bingham may not have spent more time on his land business in Maine was the marriage of his daughter Ann Louisa to Alexander Baring that summer. Deliberate in business matters, the young Englishman moved equally slowly in affairs of the heart. He had been a frequent visitor in the Bingham household for over two years and was apparently on the point of returning to Europe when he finally decided to make his proposal. Late in May Bingham wrote Knox that he had reason to suppose that Baring would not leave for Europe as early as planned, which may have meant that the question had already been popped.³ The original plan had been to hold the wedding at Lansdowne in October, but the yellow-fever epidemic in Philadelphia prompted the bride's parents to hold it at their summer home, "Bellevue," at Black Point on the Jersey coast; and there, on 23 August, the happy event took place.⁴ Bingham was delight-

¹ For a discussion of this point, see M. L. Brown, "William Bingham, Eighteenth Century Magnate," *Pa. Mag. of Hist. and Biog.*, LXI, 427-428. C. W. Hare's report to the Bingham Trustees, dated Philadelphia, 1 January 1806, lists Knox's debts to Bingham as close to \$180,000. One of the items included is the loan to Baring. This report is in BP.

² This document, dated 25 July 1806, is in BP. Knox died about three months later.

³ See Bingham to Knox, Philadelphia, 28 May 1798, KP, XLI, 116.

⁴ See M. L. Brown, "Mr. and Mrs. William Bingham," *Pa. Mag. of Hist. and Biog.*, LXI, 318. Unfortunately there is almost no material on Baring's marriage in BaP. In May, 1797, Baring wrote his father about the necessity of having someone in America to represent the English partners and indicated that he would be willing to stay. He followed that letter up with another the next day in which he spoke of his

ed with the match, though he wrote to Knox that Baring had more worth than property.⁵ This marriage did much to solidify the commercial alliance between the Bingham and the Barings, and when, four years later, Bingham's younger daughter, Maria, married Henry Baring, Alexander's younger brother, the Bingham interest became to a large extent identified with that of the Barings.

Early in 1799 Bingham wrote Knox that General Cobb "seems to have a most insuperable aversion to writing,"⁶ which was a natural conclusion to draw, considering that he had received no letters for about nine months. Soon after, however, he received a long report from his agent, and with the resumption of this correspondence, a pretty complete record of the concern's activities becomes once again available. The documents for the year 1799, especially Cobb's correspondence with his sub-agent at Union River, Donald Ross, show that some progress was being made in dealing with the lumber thieves. The Gouldsborough Packet continued to ply between Boston and Maine; new roads were cut; attempts at "hothouse" settlements were begun; and a lot of money was spent. But despite an occasional nibble from would-be purchasers of land,⁷ the great migration down east promised by Cobb and Knox failed to materialize. From Bingham's point of view, it was all outgo and no income.

The failure of the program which was to have boomed the lands of the Penobscot Million led Bingham, at about this time, to turn his attention more and more to the Kennebec tract. For some years settlers had been moving up the Kennebec River until they were now approaching the southern boundary of Bingham's Million Acres, and it was reported that squatters were al-

remaining in America as "*a very great advantage to me.*" Sir Francis, at some later date, drily endorsed the letter: "A.B. proposes to remain in America—his object must then have been a marriage with Miss Bingham." Aside from these two letters, dated 31 May and 1 June 1797, the record in BaP is silent, though Baring must certainly have written other letters which either have been since destroyed or were not microfilmed.

⁵ See Bingham to Knox, Bellevue, Black Point, 30 September 1798, KP, XLI. 155.

⁶ See Bingham to Knox, Philadelphia, 24 January 1799, KP, XLII. 33.

⁷ See, for example, Reverend Samuel Reed to Cobb, Warwick, 14 May 1798, in CP, in which some land agents are introduced.

ready settled on the property. Bingham was still anxious to sell this tract en masse if he could;⁸ but since there seemed to be little chance of success in achieving such a sale, it became necessary to consider what measures should be taken to prepare the land for settlers and to protect it from plunderers. From this year on, therefore, the focal point of operations begins to shift from the Penobscot tract to the Kennebec. If the program for the Penobscot Million was to be doomed to failure, perhaps something might be salvaged from the Kennebec property. Yet, as Bingham reviewed his Maine speculation at the end of the year 1799, there was little to encourage him, and it is not hard to understand why he was coming to think of his venture down east as one of the worst in which he had ever engaged.

Baring to John Williams Hope, Philadelphia, 30 April 1798 [BaP]

My dear Sir,
Philadelphia 30 April 1798

By the February packet I received your kind favor of the 7th of that month and was pleased to see my letters had got safe to hand. You were informed that Cobb was expected on from Gouldsboro'; he arrived shortly after and in the course of his residence here, our Maine speculation has been discussed in all its different details.

As it was necessary however to put upon paper our plans and views, and not leave our directions on the vague foundation of irregular conversations, I drew up the inclosed remarks which were approved of by Mr. Bingham, and pleased both our agents.⁹ We talked over every point separately and repeatedly and as nothing has since occurred to any of us which is not there explained and defined, we conceive every contingency provided for and this paper is to be their future guide and *vade mecum*. I wanted Bingham to make up a plan that in following it hereafter he might have the additional stimulus of its being his own offspring, but I could not bring him to it, and in fact his ideas were not organised. You will observe several corrections of no material consequence, and they were

⁸ Bingham had commissioned Omer Talon to attempt a sale in Europe, but to be on the safe side he also wrote Sir Francis Baring urging him to try to find a purchaser also. He even went so far as to send powers of attorney to Sir Francis to enable him to give a deed to the property. See these powers, dated 24 January and 7 February 1797, and also Bingham to Francis Baring, 22 January and 4 July 1797, all in BaP.

⁹ See the document printed immediately below.

made chiefly to humour his opinions when he gave any. He is very much pleased with the whole and as you will observe, I have put it out of his power to clog our agents in details. I have no doubt but our plan will proceed smoothly and satisfactorily to the accomplishment of our object. You will perceive that I have avoided the necessity of a recurrence to Mr. B. on trivial points of direction, owing to his inability to attend to them. It is left entirely to the agents and they must judge for themselves. Cobb and Richards were very much pleased with the latitude of power, in which there is no possible danger, and I have rather said more of confidence and liberality than might otherwise have been necessary, that they might feel more bold and independent from the general propensity to diffidence on the part of our friend. From some expressions in your letters I rather apprehend that I have given a more unfavorable impression of Mr. B's character as an associate in this business than I intended. I pointed out the weak parts to shew the necessity of guarding them and the means taken to effect it. They are not dangerous and I believe you will find them secured by our plan. I should enter into detail remarks on several small parts of this paper if I did not expect shortly to be able to do it more effectually in person, and shall therefore leave it for the present.

As far as I can collect your wishes with respect to me from your letter, you appear to think my stay here this summer would be serviceable, but I believe you will alter your opinion when you see how clearly our future proceedings are laid down. The operations of this summer are commencing and nothing in the course of them can want any sort of interference, either of Mr. Bingham or myself. If such interference or personal attention should become necessary, it must be at a future period, when a greater maturity of our plan may give inducement to alterations which our agents might require our assistance in. I have therefore after mature consideration determined to follow my intention of returning in the course of a few weeks, and I need not add that I shall always be satisfied if you should choose to send me back again at any time or to any place. A day's notice will put me in readiness for any part of the world you please,¹ and at all events not above three months will be lost, if you wish me to return immediately. As to my projected trip to the West Indies, I can form no opinion of the time when it might be practicable, but whether I go from hence or Europe, it will not make a fortnights difference. But my strongest wish to return is to explain more minutely what

¹ It is interesting to note that Baring could make an offer of this nature less than four months before his marriage to Ann Bingham.

I have been doing here, and to give you information which it would be impossible to give by correspondence. I should not like to go to the West Indies, where I might be detained some time, without seeing you, and upon reflection you will find the loss of time a trifle. These considerations have determined me to return, and as the earlier I now set out, the sooner I shall again be at your orders, I hope to follow this letter in less than a month, so that it will be useless to write me any more here.

I went to Boston with Richards and left him there with Cobb, busy in procuring the several objects necessary for their departure. I have since received several letters from the former and conclude that they have ere this left Boston. They have procured the labourers wanted, but I do not yet know upon what terms. They have also purchased a schooner for our packet of 122 tons for 2,500 dollars, which is larger than we intended, but I suppose she was the best suited vessel they could procure. Black does very well and will be a useful subject.

I have no further details to trouble you with at present, particularly as you will see me so shortly. I am waiting for Cobb's arrival at Gouldsboro' before I can close the account of additional disbursements since the first purchase, against which you will recollect I drew last year £1,000 sterling. I shall of course settle them before my departure and then the new system of keeping accounts will commence.

Land is rather a dead property in this country at present, among holders of large tracts, and is less actively operated in than at any time since I have been in the country. I conceive this the natural effect of two important causes; first, the failure of the great speculators, who contributed by their own operations to giving a fictitious value to what in many instances had none at all, and whose example has been a scarecrow to their neighbours; and secondly, that distress the commerce of the country labours under from the depredations of the French, which has straitened commercial capitals and consequently diminished that surplus part which is commonly invested in lands. I look upon both these causes as temporary and of short duration; and even expect beneficial effects from the first, when the country has a little recovered from the shock of the explosion. The speculative value of large tracts may vary and are exposed to be affected by similar occurrences, but there is an infallible increasing population in these states and consequent increasing cultivation of land which puts the real solid value of the article beyond the reach of almost any events, and the market is a certain one to those who can wait for it. The operation of gradually increasing settlements upon the value of the soil may be compared to that of the sinking fund upon the public debt of

England in times of peace. It consumes slowly and regularly, creating a constant small demand, and a regularly progressive effect on the value of the remainder. An occasional appearance in the market of unexpected tracts which the means of the proprietors will not permit them to hold, like a new emission of stock, throws prices back, but in the case of land we have the satisfaction of being able to calculate the utmost possible extent of such apparitions. I inclose some calculations respecting the population of the United States and its territory which though not altogether correct are curious and worth attention.²

I have not heard whether Talon has made any further negotiations. I should think it must be a good time for them in Europe at present, and he is a likely man to find out the proper characters. I understand formidable improvements are preparing on DeSmeth's purchase, but of what nature I have not been able to learn. Morris is at last in prison, where Greenleaf has been some time; in the present state of things, I fear I shall not be able to sell off our Pennsylvania lands for the mortgage, though there cannot be a shadow of doubt as to their ultimate abundant security. I shall at all events leave them in good hands, though it is not at all improbable that I may be able to make some eligible arrangement with them.

The treatment of the American Commissioners at Paris together with the conduct of the French at sea, has excited a spirit of resentment in this country which was little expected and which nothing short of what has been done would have produced. Measures of defence are taking by sea and land, and resolutions and addresses approving the conduct of the Executive are pouring in from all parts of the country. A provisional army of 20,000 men is voted, with 3 frigates and 12 ships of 22 guns and under, for the protection of the coast and West India trade. This will probably be the extent of the exertions of this country and they will wait without any declaration of war until their ships meet or Talleyrand puts their ministers in the Temple. The majority of Federalists increases in Congress and I inclose a specimen of a good party speech from a New England member; in that part of the country they are all *à cette hauteur*, but Virginia is obstinately Jacobinical. An alien bill is talked of and will probably be brought forward before Congress rises. The majority of the present day are true disciples of Mr. Pitt and Mr. Burke, and what will probably surprize you from America, the voice of the people goes with

² This document, which is in BaP, attempts to estimate the population of the United States by citing various reports, travellers' accounts and so forth. It looks as if it had been prepared for publication, but whether or not it ever was or who the author was I have been unable to discover.

them. I think the crisis does honor to the government of this country; the moderation evinced while peace was thought attainable and the spirit with which all classes have rallied round the government when it was no longer so are good omens of the practicable durability of its form and the efficiency of its executive. Adams is a man of rather dull genius and no popular talents so that the effect is due to no personal popularity, but rather the reverse. I would advise your reading the instructions to and dispatches from the Commissioners in France; they are printed in a pamphlet which with some others I will send you by some London ship. I gave Mr. Thornton,³ who went to England by last packet, an introduction to Mr. H. Hope; you will find him pleasant and well informed concerning the politics of this country. He knows nothing about lands in America. He has been the main spring of the British Embassy, which since Hammond's departure (of which T. is a protégé) has been very well conducted. You must of course make allowance for diplomatic extremes and you will find him interesting. Before this reaches you I rather expect the long threatened attempt of invasion will have passed over, and though I have no apprehensions of its result in a military point of view, I dread the commercial and other confusion it must temporarily occasion. Pray believe me ever with the sincerest attachment and respect, my dear Sir,

Your ever devoted humble servant

ALEXR. BARING

John Williams Hope, Esquire

*Baring's Project for the Settlement of Maine Lands,
February, 1798 [BP]*

Proprietors of large uncultivated tracts of American lands speculate upon one or other of these two general principles. Either to resell in a mass to other speculators on the expectation of profit from the general advance of speculative prices. Or to force an additional and real value on the country by adding to the price of the land a further disburse for the purpose of opening its resources and improving it by actual settlement.

With the tract of land in Maine between the Penobscot and Schoodic owned by Mr. Bingham and ourselves as a joint undivided property we purpose following the last mention'd plan and General Cobb and Mr. Richards having undertaken to carry it into execution by their joint ef-

³ This was Edward Thornton, who had come to this country as George Hammond's secretary and who was chargé d'affaires at the British legation in Washington from 1800 to 1804. After a long and distinguished diplomatic career he was finally knighted.

forts, it becomes necessary to state in general terms our ideas of the object we have in view, and to place the future management of this important concern on a permanent methodical plan, every thing which has till now been done having from necessity wanted that regular system which we now wish to establish. After serious reflection on the various plans follow'd and opinions I have been able to collect throughout this country I am convinc'd of the impossibility of laying down positive rules for an operation every branch of which is so speculative. No two tracts of land are alike in local position and what may be very good policy in Genessee or Pennsylvania may be very different in Maine. Much useful information may however be got from the experience of those who have conducted similar operations in different parts and we will endeavour as much as possible to profit by their lights and avoid their errors. As it regards our duty we have fulfill'd it by appointing two persons as agents in whom we have the most implicit confidence, and as the direction must be active and exposed to no delay it is from them that we must expect all detail'd plans which they must execute on their own judgement and to that effect it is our intention to invest them with the greatest latitude of power. New scenes will arise and new ideas occur as our agents become better acquainted with the country of which we from a want of local information shall not be able to judge and from our distance from the scene of action could not without inconvenience direct.

On the part of the European concern Mr. Richards will have our power to act to the best of his judgement not only in all details of management but also in any extraordinary case where it may be necessary to decide with Mr. Bingham on any important point such as additional purchase of any important object or a sale of consequence etc. He will in fact take my place fully in as far as concerns this speculation and the confidence repos'd in him by all parties removes the inconvenience which would otherwise attend our absence most compleatly.

Tho' the agency of General Cobb and Mr. Richards have originated differently, it is understood that they will without further distinction unite their endeavours for our common benefit. They will arrange between them as circumstances render necessary their respective employment and consult together when requisite. Every question of no very great importance they will be obliged to decide between them as Mr. Bingham's occupations and our absence will not permit a constant recurrence, the more so also as we should probably not be able to decide so well. In every case of need however they can trouble Mr. Bingham with whom they will of course correspond.

No idea can be more erroneous than that money expended on improvements is thrown away because the identical object it is expended on is unproductive. I am on the contrary persuaded that the price of land is lost unless a sum is devoted to assist the settlement of it. We are aware that a disburse of magnitude is indispensable tho' comparatively small to that of our object, and likewise that any thing short of a sufficiency would be thrown away without any good effect. The exact medium between extravagance and parsimony is not easily hit at first; it must result from future experience. We know errors will be committed and are ready to make allowance for them, observing only as a general rule that the whole art in this business consists in producing the greatest possible effect by the smallest means. The value of land is rais'd by inducing settlers to come on and scattering them as much as possible thro' the tract. The advantage our lands enjoy in this respect of surrounding settlements and easy access by water can leave no doubt of our succeeding in this, to almost any extent we please, to those who have view'd the progress of this operation in less favour'd countries.

Everything that remains necessary is to open for emigrants a road into the very heart of the country, provide them with primary wants, assist them in the outset and force the first inland settlement by occasional residence. There can never be a want of hands when you are ready to give every applicant a good farm in a situation where he can find his way to a store and a mill.

It is obvious that we shall never make any impression on the body of our lands as long as we confine our attention as we have hitherto done to the first range of townships. The great effect produc'd upon the Genesee was by a bold incursion into the center of the forest where the first settlement was forced and all the others follow'd of course. Our lands are infinitely more susceptible of the same operation as no one part of them is very distant from old settlements and water communication.

I would immediatly proceed on the following plan. Cut a road from Gouldsborough as strait as the nature of the country will allow to the upper townships. Whether this shall be done by contract or by hired labour we must leave our agents to determine as they think least expensive. The first road need not be very well finish'd but the wider the opening the better. If possible the country should be made immediatly accessible for waggons. When by means of the road and information of your surveyors, you can ascertain the local situation of the upper townships, fix on a spot on one of the Passadunky lakes or some other advantageous position on some river for a town; clear a few acres and lay it out attending

to every circumstance necessary for this purpose such as water mill seat in the vicinity etc.; build a house or two; take up your residence in one and get a few persons to join you which you can easily do by promising them that the establishment will be supported and the country render'd inhabitable.

Cut another road as soon as possible from your town to the Penobscot at such a spot as may be most adviseable, if possible below the falls. I rather think you will then find the interior of your country most accessible from the Penobscot and you will be able to judge what acquisitions on that river would be serviceable to us. Explore the Passadunky and the navigation of the lakes.

By this time your operations will begin to attract attention. Sell a few farms round the town to settlers. Fix on your spot for your grist and saw mill, which I woud build as soon as convenient.

You may fix on some spot for a village between your upper town and Gouldsbro' either in No. 17, or by preference above it and get people to settle round it in proportion as characters present themselves.

You may afterwards penetrate eastward towards the Schoodic from your main road and plant a small settlement somewhere in the East Division according to the information you may obtain of the country. Scattering settlements in opposite directions in the very heart of the country in the manner I have mention'd is absolutely the only mode of making the land valuable. They will afterwards spread without difficulty, and as I have witness'd this operation in a country which has none of our advantages I am certain of its practicability and of its effect. In every spot where you fix a town build a decent house for the proprietors in which either agent on going there can reside. Also a store and where necessary a mill.

Some improvements should certainly precede all sales excepting in small parcels to real settlers for we should never get that price before them which we could afterwards obtain and no union of exertions can be expected in that stage of the business from partial purchasers. We know that thus far we have only disburse to look for but by the time you have made the progress I have stated applicants will appear from all quarters and you may then contract and engage in the manner which I shall hereafter state. I should think you will be able to make very considerable progress on this plan in the course of the ensuing summer and by taking care to have your operations sounded abroad you will at the end of it be able to sell some tracts for settlers to be brought from the old states the following spring and from that time forward your own immediate exertions

will be less necessary and by proper encouragement and assistance to your settlers they will continue in a regular progression the improvement of the country by their own exertions under your superintendence so as to insure a growing advance to the price of your lands.

Having stated the first steps which are necessary to be taken to bring our tract into notice and to force the first interior settlement which should precede all sales I shall proceed to give my ideas as they occur on the general and permanent plan to be afterwards pursued. Establish a Land Office at one of your residences where all applications and bargains are made. Here your books and papers must be kept. I should prefer this establishment to be in the new town as soon as possible for the purpose of helping its growth. Departments of the same must be afterwards establish'd in the Southern and Eastern Divisions for the facility of settlers. It will become necessary when you have made some progress to divide your tract into districts of direction according to local circumstances which we now know nothing about. According to the map I should think it could be best done by northern, southern, and eastern at your head quarters in each part. To each district one of the agents must make regular circuits, making known the exact time he will be in each, to receive proposals and transact business. There must be an office in each and some confidential person to superintend it. Every thing done must afterwards be reported to and recorded in the principal Land Office.

When your settlements extend and sales increase it will be necessary to have a surveyor resident on each district to run out the lines of any land you may sell, and it will be immediately necessary to have a surveyor and chainmen attach'd to the concern which you will always have employ for. They may in the first instance examine and fix all our doubtful boundaries, which is of the utmost importance, run out squatters rights, and settle with them which is equally so. I would have this done immediately and where it can be done without great prejudice to the concern I would settle amicably with them, leave them satisfied, and not stumble at any slight impositions they may put upon us and which we must expect. I would immediately make out their deeds to them, taking care to treat them all with an equal hand and to enforce firmly our rights when we think proper to claim them at all. I would observe as a general maxim that nobody must ever be allow'd to set you at defiance. You must take care what you advance but, once done, it must be persisted in. As long as the country remains unimproved and waste it is natural for large proprietors to be unpopular, but you will experience very much the reverse when the people become aware of the general benefits the country at

large derives from your efforts. Your capital helps them forward untill they can stand alone and you will find they will stand by you afterwards. I witness'd this universally in the Genesee where the settlers are a set of unprincipled vagrants as cou'd any where be collected, but in every house Williamson's public spirited exertions were the theme of conversation and he had not a vote in his country against him on his being sent their representative.⁴

It would be useless in me to point out the attaching and conciliatory ingredients of character to those who know it much better. The dispositions of the people you have to live among must guide you and I woud only observe that it is not altogether done by an overfamiliarity. People you will have to deal with are better managed by keeping them at a certain distance and creating without haughtiness a considerable portion of awe and respect.

All the townships on which there are settlers I woud have immediately survey'd, and ascertain the quality of soil, water courses, etc. and I woud follow the same plan with every one the moment it becomes broken up by a partial sale.

Nothing should be disposed of in the dark, and the contracts several persons have been treating for with General Cobb will of course fall to the ground as none of the terms of the offer have been complied with. The township on which our interior town is to be form'd must also be survey'd. I see no advantage in running it entirely out into small farms. Any person requiring one must get it from the surveyor. Particular attention must be paid to distribute advantages of meadow and waters when the township is laid out, and then the plan laid down by your surveyor shou'd never be deviated from to gratify the caprice of a settler, as it woud otherwise produce endless confusion.

A tract of land laid out for a farm should not exceed 160 acres. It is as much as any settler can want, unless to speculate on, which among this class of people I woud check as much as possible. I believe it wou'd be a good plan to lay out all farms of 160 acres exactly, which woud much assist your records. Where there are many children in a family two or even three may be given together, but I woud not divide a farm. Round your town you must lay off small tracts of 25 or 50 acres each which must bear a proportionate price, and care must be taken not to sell too many of them at the first outset. Where land is sold in any mass we can not make

⁴ This was Charles Williamson, agent on the Pulteney Purchase. Baring's entire report shows that he has been greatly influenced by Williamson's program. For further evidence on this point, see above, pp. 900-901.

reservations excepting in extraordinary cases but where it is sold in farms I would reserve particular mill seats and in some instances meadows. As the settler shou'd not in the beginning improve the former, it may afterwards be dispos'd of to some steady character whom we can depend on and who wou'd probably become a leading man in the little community which woud form around it.

Tho' as I have said above land speculation should be discouraged in the settler as it will take his attention from agricultural improvement, we are aware that there must be speculators between ourselves and the settlers to answer the place of a shopkeeper between the wholesale dealer and the consumer, for tho' we may in the first instance sell in small farms for the sake of settlers, the bulk of our sales must afterwards be to people who have connections in the old countries and means of retail sale which we could never find out, and these characters will be abundant where your improvements are sufficiently important to attract their attention.

It is necessary thus to unite the endeavours of many where the first great impression has been made by yourselves. I woud not sell a whole township to any one character that was not very respectable—a few thousand acres must answer the purposes of most. A small number of settlers must always be insisted upon and I woud never sell to any speculators who did not contemplate improvement and particularly to none whose object was lumber.

Let your endeavours chiefly point to the settlement of such parts of the tract as are distant and interior, for tho' every industrious applicant should be accommodated in some shape if possible, you need not be apprehensive of sea-shore situations or islands not doing well if such parts are assisted and forced forward which woud otherwise remain in the back ground.

The regulation of price is an important subject to be settled. I am persuaded that in this respect too much attention has till now been paid to opinions of the people in the country. Opinions of these people form themselves insensibly from habits, and a dull round of experience and custom without any recurrence to primitive causes. They have been accustom'd to consider waste lands worth nothing because they have always been neglected and plunder'd, but when we commence agricultural improvements it is to us to tell them what land in that state is worth and not to learn it from them. I am not at all dejected at the present considerations of value of soil in Maine because the very same case has occur'd in all new countries and the same revolution has been operated which I look forward to as infallible from the plan we have laid down. On Williamson's arrival in the Genesee, wild land was estimated at 1/6d. New York

money. He was long laughed at when he first asked a dollar and had much more difficulty to reconcile the minds of the people to this price than he has now to obtain 5 and 6 dollars for it. A value is always set on a thing according to what it cost the owner, which was forcibly explained in upper Canada where clear'd farms because they were originally granted away for nothing sell for very little more than could be obtain'd for waste lands on the opposite side of the river. In general you may expect to find our plan of improvements censur'd and ridicul'd among the people of the country in its commencement, but in the sequel proof will convince them and it will be in your power to name the value of the lands what you please. You must therefore not be dismay'd or deterr'd from a persevering prosecution of our project. I woud sell no lands of any description under 1. dollar the acre which should be your first year's price. I am of opinion that it will not be necessary or adviseable to give away any to induce first settlers. They may be allow'd easier terms of payment or otherwise accommodated. Where you set down yourselves, there will be no difficulty of attracting others and one season will perfectly change the aspect of what at first might be a dreary scene. Where settlers can have the neighbourhood of a mill, a store, and a highway which you may promise them, the price they pay is unimportant. You must be uniform in your prices at the same periods excepting for particular situations, town lots, etc.

During the first season you must intimate your intention of advancing your price the next to 2. dollars and after the sale of perhaps 50 or 60 thousand acres you should really advance it and in proportion as you find the rage increases and applicants press you, continue to advance by degrees as you find the country will bear it. You need have no fear of checking migrations unless your prices are absurdly extravagant, for the progressive advance, which like the present appearances dupes the unthinking looker on, is exactly the stimulus to speculation and future expectation. There is one great advantage in this system of a gradual advance of price which is that it pleases those who buy lower—gives them an idea to strain every nerve to retain and not abandon it. This is the plan that has been follow'd in the Genesee where its exact effect has been experienced but I am of the opinion that it has there been carried too far and now checks the growth of the country.

The great accommodation to settlers will result from the arrangement of a very important point for consideration. I mean the credit to be given them and terms of payment. I woud in this respect proceed with as much uniformity as possible attending to the circumstances of your settlers and the demand for lands at the time.

With a real settler who takes and improves a single farm I would be more indulgent than with a speculator and particularly to those who commence your settlements inland. If possible you should always insist on some ready money to secure you against desertion and abandonment but I would not turn away an industrious man for want of it. With those who buy for resale, I would make a cash payment a positive condition as a security for a compliance with the bargain. Speaking generally I think the following terms eligible:

Take your purchasers note payable one half in three and the other in five years with interest. Give him provisionally a promise to make him a deed on his paying the first years interest or the interest due at the time of such payment when the first year is elaps'd. On his making such payment give him a deed and take a mortgage stipulating in every instance the forfeiture of the first payments if the others are not complied with.

It would be desirable to inforce larger cash payments but I fear it would not be possible. When it can be done I should like to have $\frac{1}{3}$ d or $\frac{1}{4}$ th of the purchase price paid.

You will probably again have to combat opinion as to your mode of making deeds which after much consideration appears to be the only one unexceptionable. To make deeds and take a mortgage immediatly and previous to any payment would expose you to endless trouble and embarrassment. You will have in the beginning deserters and defaulters and it would require a troublesome process at law to regain possession. Before the settlers make any payment they risk nothing in wanting a deed and the great desire all New England people have to have a title will stimulate them to early payments.

I think Williamson's form of promise very good but it is proper that you should have one drawn up for you in Boston conformable to the laws of Massachusetts. Mr. Bingham, T. M. Willing and W. Cramond will make out a power to General Cobb and Mr. Richards jointly to make deeds. They can always be collected at the Land Office and sign'd at fix'd periods you may agree on to meet for that purpose.

As neither of our agents have ever been in the habits of business I wish particularly to impress on their minds the absolute necessity of the most minute regularity in keeping their books and papers. Without this they will in a very short time be lost in a chaos of business which they and much less we should never be able to decypher. They will also have to do with people of no regularity which renders it more necessary. Nothing should pass of any description that is not recorded in the office immediatly. It is a bad practice in business to trust the smallest trifles to memory. I

wou'd recommend your doing all your business in your office and take care to finish off all your agreements and contracts so as to leave nothing vague and undefin'd. I wou'd recommend to you to date all your deeds and bonds on the first day of the quarter, that is, every thing done in January, February, March should be dated 1st January, in April, May, June, 1st April. and the same for the others. This will ease your memory and simplify your accounts. Mr. Black⁵ who will go to Maine with Mr. Richards is a very steady young man and will be of great assistance in the office. When your business increases you must get some more hands but for some time he will suffice and you will find him very generally useful. You must accustom all your under agents, surveyors, and dependents of every description to the most rigid regularity in their returns and papers. There can be no difficulty in this if it is once commenc'd on a proper plan but any neglect will be hereafter irreparable.

Persuaded of the necessity of method and order in our office, we have furnish'd Mr. Richards from London with a regular set of books to which he will add any other which may here after be necessary as aids. The mode we should propose is as follows. He has:

1. A Day Book commonly call'd a Waste Book, in which must be enter'd day by day every receipt and expenditure as it occurs, also every contract enter'd into so that this book would be a short history of all important occurrences. and from this the several articles must be posted out into the other books to which they belong.

2nd. A Great Book wherein must be enter'd under their respective heads to which they belong every article of receipt and expence from the Day Book. This is our important book and contains the state of the concern and all its transactions.

3rd. An Account Current Book in which all our debtors are placed. They must be debited for the price of their lots sold to them and any advances made them, and credited afterwards for their payments. The object of this book is to shew at one view the state of our account with every person owing us money.

4th. A Register Book wherein must be recorded all transfers of land or promises to transfer with the conditions contracted with them. I would have a large chart of each township as it is surveyed on one leaf in the book and to be referr'd to by figures in the record on the other. This book

⁵ John Black, who was later to play such an important part in the history of the Bingham lands in Maine. For a sketch of Black, see *Bangor Historical Magazine*, iv. 61-65. See the portrait of him facing page 906. I wish to thank Miss Helen Shute, of Ellsworth, Maine, for her help in obtaining a photograph of his portrait.

is to shew the state of our property in hand—what part is sold, on what terms, and what remains unsold.

I think these books will make our concern proceed regularly and intelligibly to all parties. I shall explain to Mr. Richards every detail of the manner of keeping them and balancing them before we separate. In the beginning this one set of books will be sufficient. When you divide the tract into districts of directions it will be necessary to have others for different departments.⁶

I would propose the following plan to supply our agents with the cash they may want in Maine which has hitherto met difficulties.

Mr. Bingham and myself shall open a credit with John Codman at Boston provisionally for dollars —— in favor of General Cobb and Mr. Richards, to be renewed further when that sum is expended. At the office the cash of the concern shall be kept and replenish'd when necessary by joint orders or drafts of our agents on Mr. Codman. They should always keep about dollars 1000 by them which the extent of their operations will render necessary. They should not draw for smaller sums than dollars 500 at a time on Codman who will always be prepar'd to answer their drafts at sight. John Codman shall be directed to place one half of the sums drawn on him to account of Mr. Bingham, the other half to account of Hope and Co. and to reimburse himself on each respectively according to any directions they may give. Each may then provide for his share in the manner he pleases.

General Cobb and Mr. Richards will take care not to include their individual personal compensations in the finances of the general concern. General C. will understand directly with Mr. Bingham and Mr. R. with Hope and Co. for this object, it being the only one in which a distinction of agency appears.

By means of the communication by packet propos'd between Gouldsboro' and Boston it will be easy to get dollars from thence by giving the Captain an order on Codman.

This packet should be procur'd and establish'd as speedily as possible. It will be of most important service to supply your own stores and open an easy and a known communication with the very center of emigrations. It should be a smart small vessel, I think a schooner with tolerable accommodations of a common kind for passengers. It should be neatly painted on the outside and have *Gouldsbrough Packet* in large letters on her

⁶ This system of accounting follows closely the suggestions which Henry Hope had made to Richards before the latter's departure. See Hope's statement, dated 5 August 1797, in BaP.

stern. This communication being regular will attract attention and besides make Gouldsbro' the port of communication for the country east of Penobscot with Boston. The mere regular supply of your own stores is in itself sufficiently important tho' I have no doubt this vessel will support itself the second year by bringing down passengers at a moderate passage money and returning with lumber. As aliens can have no concern in this vessel if she must have a register, which I presume, we must come to some arrangement on this subject which can meet no difficulty. I should think a proper vessel cou'd now be purchased at Boston cheap that woud answer our purpose. A good trusty master must also be looked out for to command her.

I think it also necessary that a small sailing boat of 10 or 20 tons should be bought or built for the inland navigation of Maine. It will particularly be necessary when we have opened our communication with the Penobscot from our inland town if, as I have no doubt, it is more accessible from that river than from Gouldsbro'.

A good row boat is also of course necessary.

After much consideration of the advantages and disadvantages of Gouldsbro' I believe it must be our head quarters on the coast. The goodness of the harbor must insure its future importance tho' its dreary appearance makes it unfavorable for the first introduction of settlers. I am for this reason desirous if possible to get them on the lands up the Penobscot and make that the great inroad. When the interior of the country is settled the poor appearance of Gouldsbro' Point will make no impression but its advantages as a harbor will secure it settlement and trade.

General Cobb must not omit to get Mr. Bingham to execute the requisite formalities before his departure so as to secure the title of the last purchase from Shaw which I understand is not compleat. Shaw must also be got to give the settlers their deeds and every claim in the township must be settled that we and every body else may be enabled to ascertain our property distinctly.

I am of opinion that our buildings in Gouldsbro' should be kept in good repair and even that others should be added if occupants will take them at a reasonable rent. They should all be painted outside to look neat which woud remove much of the horrors of the place.⁷ It is necessary to observe however that our object is to improve the bulk of our lands and not the town of Gouldsbro' which must be subservient to the former and

⁷ This frank statement is pretty good evidence of how little Cobb had been able to do to make his headquarters attractive. Baring's remark, on the other hand, could hardly have contributed to the morale of his agents.

is only consider'd as a means to effect our greater purpose.

I approve of General Cobb's plan to secure the mill seats on the several streams in our tract as the only effectual mode of restraining the plunder of our own timber. I do not exactly see that it will aid our great operation otherwise than by making us more the masters of the lumber of the country but I am convinc'd it will repay a handsome profit and destroy a most nefarious practice which we can not otherwise check. I do not consider the habits of the sea shore inhabitants of our tract any ways detrimental to our plan. We should find them very much so if we attempted the old plan of working gradually agricultural settlements from the sea shore backwards, but our plan is to get our settlers on where they will be beyond the temptations of fishing and lumbering. In that case these two employments create a circulation of money in the country, a market for produce, and easy means of procuring supplies which no other new countries in America can enjoy and are well worth the disadvantages accompanying them. We must confine ourselves to approving generally this plan of securing the mills and leave the detail of it to our agents. Of all these they must judge for themselves and form their own plans. We can only lay down the great outline of ours which all theirs must tend to accomplish with as little digressions as possible. If they think the acquisition of the mill at Prospect Harbor desirable, they should treat for it on the best terms possible. I can not pretend to judge of the question. There can be no doubt that lumber will become very valuable on a return of peace and if we can collect any quantity of it at Gouldsbro' it will always sell well and at the same time facilitate our operations in the interior.

I am after much reflection convinc'd that it is indispensable that the concern should have a store of their own. They will in the beginning of their operations have numerous wants themselves for which they must not depend on the country store keepers nor pay their prices. We shall besides expend considerable sums in labor of which a great part will return to the store if well conducted. Our settlements in the interior will require small branch stores which we must begin by supporting ourselves and I will give a plan for keeping the accounts of these several stores and also of our mills so as to conform to our mode of bookkeeping. Our agents must assort the articles they will want and which are of primary necessity in the country, and some person must be appointed at Boston to do their business there as also that of the packet when it is established. I must here again repeat that it is not our wish to monopolize every species of business in the new country. On the contrary we wish it cou'd be done by others. We do not want the profits either of the store keeper or the miller. Our

object is solely to enhance the value of our lands by procuring these advantages to settlers. To that point all operations should be directed and their utility judged of invariably from their tendency towards it.

We have had under consideration several offers of land in our neighbourhood principally of Leonard Jarvis and Jones.⁸ I should have no objection to making any additional purchases that would be of service to our present property, but I do not wish an extension of it without that motive, considering the object we hold large enough to engage all our exertions and attention. It may perhaps be good policy to buy out needy men for the purpose hereafter of supporting prices but they cannot interfere with our sales on long credit as it would not answer their object. Jones's tract on Union River which he wants to sell is valuable and I should think a good purchase. Of the value of Jarvis's I am not sufficiently acquainted but we probably shall have to cut thro' part of them to open our communication with the Penobscot. If any part of his lands should on examination be of service to us, I would buy them. Mr. Richards will have full power to act for us in concert with Mr. Bingham in all questions of this nature which may hereafter occur. I wish principally that the Penobscot Indian lands may be examin'd, particularly their connection with ours and if one or more townships of them should be thought useful to us, measures must be taken in Boston to secure them if they do not sell too high. I would wish General Cobb to attend immediately to purchasing up all the lottery prizes scatter'd thro' our tract. They may probably now be got low as they must be of little value to the holders. To us they are important and we should not be able to collect them on easy terms if we waited untill our operations begin to take effect. These claims are troublesome and I would rather give more than their value to get rid of them.

Mr. Bingham will attend to the necessary steps to be taken to set aside Van Berkel's chicane which I conceive will now be easily done on our claiming the deeds in escrow. Mr. Bingham has also to take up the remaining original deeds from the state of Massachusetts, and to deposit stock as security for the settling penalties agreeable to our arrangement, and General Cobb must take the proper measures to enumerate our actual settlers to the satisfaction of the government of Massachusetts which he will be able to make some arrangement about at Boston.

Our plan will require considerable immediate preparations at Boston to get the hired labour on the lands as early in the season as possible, particularly the road cutters, surveyor and assistants, carpenters, etc. As to

⁸ These were the tracts in Trenton and what is now Ellsworth that have been mentioned frequently above.

the numbers of these people requisite and the means of obtaining them on the best terms, I can give no information. Our wish is to act with vigour and of course to observe all possible œconomy or as I before said to produce the greatest effect by the smallest possible means.

The last tho' not the least important subject I have to recommend is attention to puffing. Every stroke of the axe in your woods should be heard in Massachusetts and Connecticut, every hut should be call'd a village and every village a town. When you have fix'd your Land Office, you should advertize in all the principal New England papers that the tract is ready for settlement with a short account of the advantages of the country and progress of improvements taking care that your operations are previously known and talked of. You will find your reputation spread rapidly and visitors to the country will follow, who of course should be attended to. In your advertisement you must mention the establishment of a packet communication with Boston which will operate strongly, and dwell on such particulars as are likely to captivate the people you have to expect. Tho' puffing has a great effect and indeed the greatest real exertions woud be buried without some portion of it, care must be taken that those who are induc'd to come on your lands are not disappointed and for this purpose some little shew should be attended to in your improvements. Being in a good or bad tavern to a visitor has often a great effect on opinion. I woud erect a comfortable one at the new town and occasionally else where as they become necessary and you find people whom you can depend on to manage them. In the beginning it will be requisite to assist this business by advancing articles from the stores but afterwards it will without difficulty support itself. The innkeeper at Bath in the Genesee two years after its first settlement, in the midst of a perfect wilderness, took in the course of six months dollars 2000. in his business and another at Geneva considerably more. With whatever œconomy the business may really be conducted it should as much as possible have the outside appearance of generosity and even profuseness. People will feel courage in expecting to be backed by a large capital in their public improvements and whenever any important object can be attain'd by real assistance it should be attended to. I woud for instance second any attempt of our settlers in process of time in our new town to establish their meeting house, and lay out the spot for it and talk about it almost immediatly. Be ready to encourage mending the roads and cutting new ones, building bridges, getting cattle into the country, etc.

I woud sometime hence when your country has made some progress get a newspaper establish'd at Gouldsbro' or elsewhere. This kind of

forced refinement excites great attention and has often a wonderful effect from its singularity. There is as yet I believe none east of Wiscasset. Your packet communication will assist your editor and it will be a necessary vehicle hereafter of your advertisements and domestic arrangements.

To persons who have never enquir'd into nor watched the progress of new settlements I may appear to look too far forward and to be too sanguine in my expectations. But I am confident of our plan being practicable to a much greater degree than I have express'd and with an active and vigorous management a short period will prove it. Nothing of the kind has ever been attempted in America on a more susceptible object or under such promising agency, and while we look forward to the result with confidence we are on all occasions ready to make liberal allowances for unavoidable disappointments and unintentional errors which from the novelty of the business we may in some instances expect.

Tho' we have thus given our opinions and ideas with every detail we are aware that our agents must not be bound to them when any deviation is thought necessary. In every detail of the business they must follow their own judgement in which we have the most implicit confidence and above all they will find it necessary to act upon every occurrence with firmness and decision.

Philadelphia the 25th January 1798

The foregoing plan having been read over and amply discussed with Mr. Bingham, General Cobb, and Mr. Richards it was generally approv'd of by all parties to serve as the basis for our operations in Maine with the following trifling deviations and exceptions.

4th sheet. 1st page.⁹ It was thought expedient not to give a deed and take a mortgage untill a larger payment was made than the interest. The exact sum to be previously receiv'd must depend on the magnitude of the object and calculated so as to secure the proprietors against abandon on the part of the purchaser.

Same sheet. 2nd page.¹ It will not be prudent to stipulate the loss of the first payment in case of a want of punctuality in making the others, at least not as a general rule, and particularly not for actual settlers. The condition will alarm and deter purchasers as we must expect defaulters among them. With speculators we may be more rigid and the forfeiture of their first cash payment may be made a condition for their not prosecuting the remaining terms of the contract.

⁹ See above, p. 927.

¹ See above, p. 927.

Same sheet. 3rd page.² It was thought better to date all contracts from the first day of each ensuing month instead of each quarter which would be nearly an equal facility to the books and not bring too many payments to the same date which might excite a spirit of resistance from a common cause of self interest among the settlers.

Same sheet. Page 4th.³ The Account Current Book was thought unnecessary as the Great Book will contain every debtors account current, and it is desirable to simplify our books as much as possible that they may be the more correct and regular.

Philadelphia the 5th February 1798.

We deliver the foregoing remarks to General Cobb and Mr. Richards as a summary of our ideas at present of the operations we have in view in Maine under their joint direction. They must be considered more as hints than positive instructions and subject to such deviations as future experience may point out. We consider our duty thus far performed and in this shape we must submit our concern to our agents which we do with the most perfect confidence in their exertions to insure to our enterprize the success we most sincerely and earnestly expect.⁴

Philadelphia the 16th February 1798.

WM. BINGHAM

ALEXR. BARING.

Baring to Bingham, Boston, 9 March 1798 [BP]

Boston 9th March 1798

My dear Sir,

Having got rid of nearly all my bussiness at this place I shall follow very shortly my present precursor to Philadelphia which, without any particular object, I wish merely to prevent your being taken by surprize. Cobb and Richards are collecting their wants. We have discussed every thing in every shape and view and as my presence is now rather an incumbrance than otherwise I have determined to accompany tomorrow a gentleman who is going with his own carriage to New York. As it will be my last visit to that place I shall stay a few days and then proceed to Philadelphia where for many reasons I am in a hurry to be.⁵ I have the

² See above, p. 928.

³ See above, p. 928.

⁴ The last paragraph of this document is in Baring's hand, the rest in that of a clerk.

⁵ This may be an oblique reference to Baring's love affair with Bingham's daughter Ann.

pleasure to inform you that the labour wanted for our operations will be easily procured and from the press of applications we have reason to hope on comparatively moderate terms. It will be near the middle of next month before our friends will leave this place and as we have at last launched them with every possible requisite for success we may with confidence look to it if similar operations are susceptible of any. You will see by the inclosed advertisement that the Penobscot lands are for sale. The terms rather please me as they will insure settlers and improvements.⁶ I have left directions to obtain if possible a copy of the survey of these lands for our information. The puff direct of this publication is a good specimen and I have recommended the stile to Cobb. Our intended improvements are much talked of and with the joint assistance of the axe and the pen they will spread and make general and favorable impressions. Your Kennebec tract is said to be very ripe for settlement and a town has this session been incorporated within a very short distance of it.

I have had several conversations with General Knox about his situation but have not been able to realize any arrangement with regard to his debt that would be agreeable to you. He wanted me to prolong the period of payment which I explained my inability to do in consequence of your responsibility which I should thereby prejudice. He can get no indorsers here without a great sacrifice which would materially affect the general value of his lands, having already as I understand encroached as much as he safely can upon the disposition of his neighbours. I am confirmed in my opinion that you would do well to realize the amount of your several claims in *land*. I shall not want the dollars 8/m⁷ until my return. The House in New York is extremely disappointed at the decision of your arbitrators and would hardly credit my assertion that you were equally so. You may rely upon it that they would set aside the decision if you wish it. I was told they felt personally sore having raised such high expectations in Amsterdam on what they thought infallible ground.⁸ By some strange fatality [?] I get no letters from home. One of the packets is lost and the others were out of time. Our latest political news is from the south and

⁶ I have found no advertisements of the Bingham lands in the Boston papers of this period. It may be that Baring was referring to advertisements for several other tracts in Maine. See, for example, the Boston *Columbian Centinel* for 7, 14, 21, and 31 March and 7 and 14 April 1798.

⁷ Whether this is a misprint for the \$18,000 loaned Knox, or another debt which Bingham owed Baring I am unable to discover.

⁸ This presumably refers to Bingham's difficulties with the Willinks of Amsterdam. See M. L. Brown, "William Bingham, Eighteenth Century Magnate," *Pa. Mag. of Hist. and Biog.*, LXI. 407-409.

forebodes a repetition of a Parisian *nouvel ordre de choses* but of what complexion I have no idea. I think it not improbable that some new party may build its popularity on a general peace which the people of France must know in their reach. The event would not surprize me in the least. In the mean time the invading preparations are kept up. I have no apprehensions for the effect of any violent blow but very serious ones for the consumptive operations of a lingering inactive and exhausting war which we can not much longer without imminent danger sustain. That I have nothing else to do does not justify me in taking up more of your time who have always much. I will therefore conclude with the only real object of the present which was to convey the sincere tribute of my respectful compliments and regard to Mrs. Bingham, Ann, and Maria which pray don't forget, and to assure you of the invariable esteem

of dear sir,

Yours most truly

ALEXR. BARING

If you wish me to do any thing for you at New York write to me to the care of William Codman.

*Cobb to Bingham, Boston, 16 April 1798 [BP]*⁹

Boston April 16th 1798

My dear Sir:

The variety of my excursions, and little avocations have been so great since my arrival in this town, as must plead my apology for not communicating with you before.

Mr. Richards and myself are making every arrangement for opening the campaign as soon as the season will possibly admit. Our surveyor and chainmen are engaged; the road cutters and carpenters are mostly agreed for, our schooner will be purchased this week and we shall depart for Maine the last of this month.

The Cabots have again commenced their action against you, and summonses have been left with General Jackson, and with me as your agent and tenant; it was enter'd at the Court of Common Pleas for the County of Essex on the second Tuesday of this month. You will be pleas'd to communicate either to your lawyer or me what you would wish to have done in this business.¹

⁹ There is an almost identical copy of this letter in CP.

¹ For the Cabot suit, see below, pp. 1125-1138.

I have obtain'd Shaw's deed for the last purchases and General Jackson has paid him the ballance amounting to 921 dollars and 45 cents. This sum should be remitted as soon as possible.

I must request your permission to draw on you for one thousand dollars in part of my next annual stipend, before I leave this place. Perhaps you had better transmit this sum together with the ballance of Shaw's purchase, in a post note to me or General Jackson.

By this mail you will receive, for Mrs. Bingham, a poem written by Mrs. Morton.² I still consider Miss Bingham's commission to be in force for a bear skin which shall be procured whenever a good one can be found.

If it is your intention that any lumber should be sent to you further than what you have already order'd, you will be pleas'd to inform me as soon as you can make it convenient.

I am sir with esteem and respect

Your obedient servant

DAVID COBB

Bingham to Cobb, Philadelphia, 30 April 1798 [CP]

Philadelphia April 30th 1798

Dear General:

I received your letter of the 16 instant but must plead the same apology for not answering it sooner, which you make for not writing me at an earlier period—the activity of my private avocations.

I observe that Mr. Richards and yourself are making the most busy preparations for commencing your operations, and that you have employed a number of persons to assist you, who are about taking their departure from Boston.

I hope that the eventual advantages will recompense the vast expences that will be incurred in forming this settlement. I wish our lands possessed of so many allurements, as to induce such persons to emigrate there of their own accord, instead of being under the necessity of seeking for them at Boston.

I observe that you are desirous of drawing for one thousand dollars in anticipation of your next years salary. If you recollect the arrangement you proposed to me, when the \$3,500 were advanced, you will find that the amount was to be repaid out of your future annual claims for

² Mrs. Morton was Sarah Wentworth Morton, known as "the American Sappho." See E. Pendleton and M. Ellis, *Philenia, The Life and Works of Sarah Wentworth Morton, 1759-1846*, *University of Maine Studies*, 2nd Series, No. 20.

personal compensation. By the inclosed Account Current you will find that you are debited with a ballance of \$4,055.55, giving you credit for salary untill the 1st February 1798, when the new arrangement commences.

However I should have no objection in gratifying your wishes if it was in my power.

But such have been the losses and disappointments that I have recently met with, that I cannot raise money out of the sale of property to discharge the claims that exist against me. There is an installment due to the State on the 1st June next, and I have no means of paying it without making immense sacrifices—such as no consideration of eventual profits arising from these lands, would ever have induced me to make, if I had not already engaged in the business—superadded to which I have some difficulties of a very unexpected nature to encounter, which indisposes me still more to this concern. As you may be disappointed in not receiving a part of the sum you request, I herewith remit you five hundred dollars, on account of your salary—but you must observe that it will take many years to ballance this account, by the payment of a moiety thereof, each year. If I can find the means of furnishing my portion of the expenditures for the improvement of these lands, I shall be exceedingly satisfied.

I shall make a remittance to General Jackson for the ballance he has paid Shaw, and I wish, after you have had his deed recorded, you would transmit it to me, by some safe conveyance.

As soon as you can accomplish it, I wish you to make up your accounts to the 1st February last, when the new concern commences.

I do not wish you to send any more lumber than was mentioned in my first letter, and even that but on condition that you can procure it to be shipped on easy terms of freight, by some vessel, that may be destined to this place.

I shall take proper measures relative to the suit commenced against me by the Cabots etc. You do not seem to be acquainted with the reasons that induced them to have recourse to this mode of procedure, after having already been cast [?] in the courts of your State.

You promised to send me a quantity of dumb fish, and a patent machine for washing cloaths, but I suppose you have forgotten it.

I am with regard and esteem

Dear General

Yours, etc.

WM. BINGHAM

General Cobb

Bingham to Cobb, Philadelphia, 14 May 1798 [CP]

Philadelphia May 14th 1798

Dear General:

I wrote you some time since and at that time remitted you a draft on the Branch Bank for \$500 being a part of the sum you requested me to advance on your salary, and was as much as in the present state of my finances, I could possibly disburse. Such has been my situation that I have not been able, untill this day to remit General Jackson the money he advanced to Mr. Shaw for the ballance due to him for the Gouldsborough purchases. Neither have I been able to forward to Mr. Codman my part of the advances he has made for the concern, which have amounted to upwards of \$8,000. I must confess myself much surprized at so large a disbursement in so short a period.

The rising value of our property must be very striking, in order to justify such considerable outgoings. But at this moment, such payments are peculiarly distressing, when I cannot procure the means of making them, without the greatest sacrifice and inconvenience. Having no active pursuits of business which give me the command of funds, I am compelled to sell property, when I want to raise money. Therefore I wish you had informed me of your making use of your credit on Mr. Codman to such an extent, that I might have been prepared for the event, and not have so long protracted the remittance. As for bank credits, I must lose all character, if I have recourse to them, after the many declarations I have made, not to avail myself of them, in any case whatsoever. I am therefore obliged to collect all my outstanding debts, in order to enable me to meet my engagements. But no consideration of eventual profit from the Maine Lands, will induce me to retain them much longer, under the inconveniences of advance of money that I have submitted to, from the difficulty and sacrifice that must attend the obtaining it.

I am now casting about and enquiring for a proper person to send to Europe, as an agent for the sale of the Kennebec tract, at whatever price can be procured for it, for my active monied resources will not admit of such heavy advances for the payment of these lands and to supply the continual disbursements that will attend their settlement and improvement.

The draft you have made upon me for \$1,000, being the sum you referred to, and which I informed me [you] could not at present be advanced without immense inconvenience, will be returned to you. I had previously remitted you one half of the amount.

With my best wishes for your health and a successful pursuit of your object, I am with great regard

Dear General

Yours sincerely

WM. BINGHAM

General Cobb

Jackson to Cobb, Dorchester, 30 August 1798 [CP]

Friend David:

Dorchester August 30. 1798

I received your favor of the 19th instant by Godfrey.³ When I wrote you last, and sent you Mr. B.— letters, I was so much engaged at the departure of the frigate, and particularly at the moment Captain Godfrey call'd on me that I had only time to enclose those letters to you. Indeed I had forgot the circumstances of the bill at that instance, altho' it made *a deep very deep* impression on my mind at the time, and of which I intend'd to have stated to you when I wrote, and enclosed you my correspondence with him on that subject. It most certainly (*considering the parties*) discovers in him a little, mean, and unworthy conduct, very far from what you had a right to expect from him, and I think you ought most certainly to take a proper stand in this business and treat the subject as it deserves. The fact is, on the bills being presented to him or your letter to him coming before the bill, he declined paying it, and gave me or you some trifling reasons for so doing, and at the same time complain'd of you, but for fear it should be too great an inconvenience to you to take up the bill, he forwarded a note of \$500 to assist you in that operation. As the bill was drawn at such a sight that a letter from me would reach him before it became due, I instantly wrote him, and returned the \$500 dollar note, and informed him you had departed for Gouldsboro', and had not made the least provision for the drafts returning, and that I had endorsed the bill solely to oblige the parties, that if I had to take it up, it must and would be done by a redraft on him until it was finally paid. After this I heard nothing more from him on the subject. He received the 500 dollars, and I believe paid the bill as it never came back. Thus endeth the first lesson. As the prevailing fever in the town became very serious, and my not having lived out near half my days, nor my usefulness, and my friends not wishing to part with me in a sudden and unbecoming manner

³ This was David Godfrey, captain of the Gouldsborough Packet. He is mentioned frequently in CP.

gave me an invitation to pass a few weeks on or near the hieghts of Dorchester for the benefit of my declining health, and to retire from the putrid air of the city, here I have been for two weeks, and from the difference of the air, with a country diet, and abundance of ice to cool the wine, punch, and cider, and on the butter for breakfast, and this in dog days, I find I am fast recovering, and in a few weeks if I continue here, I expect the doctor will pronounce me out of danger and able to return to the city at the opening of the Federal Street Theatre on the first Monday in October next, at which time our campaign will open, and I hope to keep the field until the end of the season. That you may not be much alarmed on my account, you must know that I am able with the help of my horse and chair to make one of the party at the social circle in the city on Saturdays, where you and Richards are frequently mentioned with much pleasure, at the expence of a bottle of wine to the landlord.

I thank you my good friend for the offer of an apartment in your house, and if I should make you a visit before you build a new one (as it is probable I may, you remember the conversation we had), I shall with pleasure accept your invitation. On locating the spot for your new house I pray you to take into consideration a pond, brooks or large spring of water in its vicinity so that by an aquiduct and pipes you may convey the water to any part of the house. This with a little care and attention in placing your house may very easily be effected, as your country abounds with water. And before you build the house, send me a plan of it. I may want to make some alteration in my appartments, for be assured I am serious and think it more than probable that I shall pass a considerable part of my time with you, if we live, and you permanently establish yourself in that country. I am now bring[ing] all my concerns to a point and closing my business, which I hope to effect in a year from this time. In that case, I shall be a citisen of the world, and attached to no particular spot, excepting to a few, very few friends indeed here, they [then?] away. I shall wish to pass the remainder of my days in quiet and retirement from the noise and bussel of the world. You know my determination on this head. The papers you ask for are come to light, and shall be forwarded you by this conveyance if I visit the town before your son departs.

Our friend H. Knox's family were alarmed at the fever and a few weeks since went off for St. Georges. Such was his business here, he remained behind until Monday last when he fled. I expect him back in ten or twelve days again, as his business and engagements will not permit him to be absent longer than that period.

You will observe in the papers the appointment of the General Officers

to the troops that are to be raised.⁴ It is said and believ'd by a certain party, that it was and is the intention of the Senate that Colonel Hamilton should be the second in command, that is, the first Major General, and it is pretty well understood that there was some undue management in this business. Be that as it may, our friend *will not*, nor cannot, with honor to himself accept of that appointment under these circumstances. All his friends, without one exception are of the same opinion. Major Rice, Major Gibbs, and General S. Elliot will accept of the command of regiments, Isaac Winslow a Major of one of the regiments.⁵ A number of young gentlemen have offered themselves for Captains and Subalterns. I think by a little attention, Massachusetts can furnish several very good corps of officers at least for three or four regiments. You will observe that this establishment will be for life. For my own part I cannot see how our friend under any circumstances can accept of any appointment whatever. Such are his engagements and arrangements at St. Georges that the disadvantage and sacrifice to him, to leave and abandon that property to be conducted by agents will be almost a total loss of the whole, and if his reasons were good for leaving the War Department, they must be in a ten fold ratio at this moment against his entering again into public life. Besides this, there may be many more reasons assigned to strengthen this opinion. He is fully possessed of my sentiments and wishes on this subject.

The wind having been at east for two or three days past I have come to town this morning Sunday September 2d. concluding I should find you[r] son here, but to my great disappointment I learn he went to Portsmouth yesterday. I understand the packit is here, and as I shall return into the country this afternoon, I shall leave this with Mr. Welles with directions to give it to Captain Godfrey in the morning if he can be found, which I hope will be the case, as you will find enclosed the papers you requested. My particular regards to Mr. Richards, and beleive me

Very sincerely, as ever—

forever and for A—your friend

H. JACKSON

P.S. It is said the fever is abating.

For politicks I refer you to your son and the

news papers. I think after this you will say I am a clever fellow.

⁴ This was the appointment by President Adams of Washington, Hamilton, C. C. Pinckney, and Knox to head the new army. For Knox's reaction to this, see N. Brooks, *Henry Knox*, 250-251.

⁵ Nathan Rice and Caleb Gibbs were Cincinnati friends of Jackson's. See F. S. Drake, *Memorials of the Society of the Cincinnati of Massachusetts*, 310, 436. Isaac Winslow was a cousin of Knox's. Elliot was, I believe, Samuel Elliot, a Boston merchant and a general in the militia.

Ross to Cobb, Union River, 19 November 1798 [CP]

Union River 19th. November 1798

Sir:

I did myself the honor of writing you two posts since respecting lawyers. Had I not been buoyed up with hopes of having the pleasure to see you and Mr. Richards here, I woud have been more particular, such as informing you that your turkeys and mutten are ready for embarkation if you wish for them.

I had the pleasure of spending a few days lately at Castine. Mr. Parker gave me letters to the men whose names you noted. On hearing from you will deliver or keep them as you see meet. They are preparing with energy for the logging campaign. No one has hitherto signified any intention of obtaining your approbation, Mr. Fabrique⁶ excepted, who expresses a very earnest desire to obtain your licence, for this winter; and for which he is ready and willing to give you a generous compensation and any security you wish for the performance of his agreement. I told him what I understood your determination was. He replied he had heard you say the same, and said there were many going that did not mean to make application, but woud risque the consequences, that he did not wish to be one of the number, was willing to conform to the laws of the country and the regulations of the proprietors. In short, he said so much, that tho' I have no reason to think that applications of this sort are agreeable to you, yet I promised to mention it to you and report him your answer.

I had a letter from General Hunewill to day. He and Forbes⁷ are to be here next Friday. If you have a voyage to this part of the wilderness in contemplation, to meet them here might help to glide the gloomy hours away.

I have the honor to be

With much respect and esteem

Sir, your most obedient servant

DONALD ROSS

Honorable David Cobb, Esquire

Jackson to Cobb, Boston, 2 December 1798 [CP]

Boston December 2. 1798 Sunday

Friend David:

When our good friend Richards' arrival was announced to me, I ex-

⁶ John Fabrique was a settler whom Cobb and Richards engaged to start the "hot-house" settlement at Mariaville.

⁷ Eli Forbes, Registrar of Deeds, at Castine.

pected the next breath to pronounce yours also, which would have been highly gratifying to your friends, and particularly so at this time to me. I had anticipated seeing you by the return of the packet, and began to make some arrangements in my apartments for your reception. I assure my disappointment is really great, as I expect much comfort and consolation from your society and friendship. Your letter of the 20th ultimo with several conversations with Mr. R on the subject of your engagements, mutiny, etc., the last season, with the mode and manner of your feeding your poultry, chucky pigs, etc., praying in your family, and indeed all your indoor and outdoor occurrences has given me much pleasure and amusement and I am charmed and delighted to learn the great reformation that has taken place in you—that your industry, sobriety and œconomy are conspicuous to the whole village, and its vicinity, and they contemplate recommending you to the proper authority as a well qualified and proper person for a licence to keep a tavern, and I understand you have enlarged your house for that purpose. To be serious, altho' I think you have made astonishing operations the last season considering the means you have had, yet I think its trifling with abilities, time, and property, to *crawl* and to continue *crawling* as you have done for a year or two past. "To make haste slowly" is a good maxim, in most cases, but in your movements, it wants a *stroak*, and indeed a *bold stroak*, to draw the attention of the whole country, and if possible all Europe,—that your operations in one year, ought to anticipate and bring forward that country in its improvements and advantages at least twenty years, beyond its common increase, for its natural situation and advantages. Its true you have done well, very well with your 15 or 20 hands, but its no more than the drop to the ocean, in comparison to what must and ought to be done, to bring that tract into proper view and notice, and to make the purchase of proper advantage to the proprietors of it. You ought to proceed with great strength and exertion. For two men of your and Mr. Richards character, reputation, and stand in life, to be employed in such twopenny and threepenny operations is contemptible and laughable in the highest degree, and I think you ought in justice to yourselves, one or both of you to retire from such an establishment, as not requiring gentlemen of education and abilities as agents or to superintend their plans of operations. I am sorry to learn you have let another season pass over without locating a proper establishment for yourself. You are, my dear friend, criminally neglectful in this respect, as I think its the first duty you owe yourself and family at this moment to commence and bring forward a proper and advantageous location for their and your future residence, that in any event they may

have an establishment that will make their lives comfortable and happy, without a dependance on any one,—and you must know that one year of your life in bring[ing] forward such an establishment for them is worth ten years if you should be taken from them, if not total distruction to them. I therefore hope and pray you will set about this business without delay, and work while the day lasts, for your night is coming on with rapid strides.

As to Mr. Bingham I have the same opinion of him you have. As to the bill, there was such a bitterness it was contemptable. I have said but a few words to Mr. R on the subject. However I would have you shew a proper resentment to such conduct. Yet I should in every respect due my duty to him, and communicate and give him every information that the nature of your operations and situation requires.

I sympathize with our friend General Campbell in the distruction of his mills.⁸ He will find it very difficult to procure the relief you propose.

I think you must remember the conversation I had with you on the subject of our mutual friend HK[']s affairs, and my fears on that head. Things went on in the old train for sometime after your departure, but it was evident to him they could not last long, altho' he had ample property to refund the last shilling provided he could obtain time from those persons who held his paper. It was therefore concluded, by the advice of some of his friends, that however mortifying it might be to our feelings and pride he ought not to continue any longer in giving new paper for old, at a high accumulated interest and increasing his debt every month to an immence digree, this being the case when his paper became due. The holders could not obtain payment with that punctuality they expected. He made propositions to all who hold his paper to pay them immediately and deduct 10 per cent from a fair and just valuation made by three indifferent persons, or he will give unequivocal real security payable on time with interest annually. Many of the holders of his paper to a considerable amount have acceded to this last proposition, as he informs me, to the amount \$70,000. I am led to believe and hope that his property is ample and solid to pay every dollar he owes, and leave him a handsome property, if he has only three or four years given him to reap the benefits arising from the immence improvements and very large sums expended in erecting build-ings, mills, canals, etc., within the Patent—and that he takes up his abode with his family wholly in that country. This is compleatly understood as part of the system and arrangement to be adopted. I am on the whole of

⁸ This was Alexander Campbell of Narraguagus. See *Bangor Historical Magazine*, VII. 164–166. I have not been able to discover what happened to the General's mills.

his paper, and General Lincoln about 2/3ds,⁹ and besides that he owes me \$40,000 dollars cash loaned him from time to time out of my pocket. This is a heavy sum and for which I am at this moment indetted, as I considered it my duty to take care in the first instance all those to whom I was personally indetted having received value myself. I previously secured to them all my real estate in this town, and in the final issue of this business, if our friends property falls short, I shall have no objection to their sharing my last cent. They attached all General L— property at Hingham and wherever they could find it. They have also attached some of mine. I assure you, my dear friend, this business is the most mortifying and distressing of any circumstance of my life. It is not possible for me to express to you half my feelings on this subject. To look back will do no good, and to look forward is only trouble and embarrassment for the remainder of my life. I thank you for your milk and potatoes. I think its possible I shall be happy to accept your kind invitation. I assure you every hour of my life proves to me that true happiness is only found with a few friends in retirement, therefore keep in view my parlour and bedchamber in the new house and establishment contemplated. When I shall have the pleasure of seeing you, many communications will be made, which I shall reserve for that interview.

You have already been informed that our friend HK was appointed one of the Major Generals in our National Established Army. He was on the same list and appointed on the same day, with Hamilton and Pickney [*sic*], but they, standing on the list before him, with some manoeuvring and cunning in certain heads of departments, it is determin'd they take rank as they stand on the nomination. This you may well suppose excluded him from accepting in that degraded situation, however many arguments and means were made use of to persuade him to accept, but all to no purpose. He explicitly declined. In so doing, he fully accorded in the opinion and wishes of his particular friends. His pecuniary situation is such, that had all other things been agreeable, it would have been madness to have accepted. Hodgkins has a very good company, and is playing to very good houses in our New Theatre, Federal Street.¹ I enclose you one of his bills, with some of the latest news papers. As to the news and politicks at home and abroad I refer you the papers which I understand you regularly take by mail. I refer you to Mr. Richards respecting all our friends with our mode and manner of living—HK, Hays, Russell, Jones, Eustis, Jeffery. And my good friend Elisha Sigourney who is now with [me] de-

⁹ There is some material on this transaction in KP, XLIII. 76 and 166.

¹ For this theater, see J. Winsor, *Memorial History of Boston*, IV. 362-364.

sires their remembrance.² My respects to Mrs. Cobb, and your family.

God bless you for ever and for A

Your old friend

H. JACKSON

David Cobb, Esquire

Bingham to Cobb, Philadelphia, 26 December 1798 [CP]

Dear General:

Philadelphia December 26th 1798

I have received none of your favors for a considerable time past. The last of which I am in possession is dated the 18th May.³

I am therefore, for want of information, deprived of the means of conveying my sentiments on the various objects that have occupied your attention for the last season, and which have involved such an immense expenditure to the parties, as appear by the drafts of Mr. Codman.

I will not venture an opinion on the subject, how far the interests of the concern will authorize such heavy advances, from any eventual advantages that will result therefrom, as I am entirely unacquainted with your proceedings, except from the information which Mr. Baring has imparted to me, and which he has derived from the occasional (tho frequent) communications of Mr. Richards, some of which have been addressed to Messrs. Hope and Co.

I shall therefore wait untill I receive your next letters before I indulge in any observations on this subject.

The very large sums of money I have paid and am to pay on account of these lands, beyond the amount of the sales, renders it extremely inconvenient to me to make further disbursements.

The unfortunate situation of our friend General Knox deprives me of all expectation of receiving in any convenient time, any part of the large loan I made him; nor for the ballance on his share of the lands is there any reason to suppose the smallest reimbursement for a long period.

Thus circumstanced, you will naturally suppose that I am very anxious to raise the value of the property, on which your agency is exerted, that I may have some chance of more immediate advantages than will probably be derived from the remaining parts of the land.

You will essentially oblige me in being very explicit and full with re-

² Michael Moses Hays, the merchant, Benjamin Russell, editor of the *Centinel*, presumably John Coffin Jones, William Eustis, and Patrick Jeffrey.

³ There is a copy of this letter in CP. In it Cobb simply announces the start of the year's campaign and encloses his annual accounts.

spect to your operations, as this information may have an important influence on my views with respect to the Kennebec tract, which I find demands immediate attention, and which I am happy to observe, from the concurrent and unbiased testimony of various persons, is held in high estimation.

In anxious expectation of hearing from you, and with my best compliments and good wishes to your family, I am with regard

Dear General

Your friend and obedient humble servant

WM. BINGHAM

General Cobb

*Cobb to Bingham, Gouldsborough, 31 January 1799 [BP]*⁴

Dear Sir: Gouldsborough January 31st. 1799

I receiv'd your letter of the 26th ultimo by the last mail; by this you will have inclosed our accounts for the last year.

I have heretofore omitted my communications with you for reasons that in my mind are satisfactory.

I will now endeavour to give you a detail of our proceedings for the season. We purchased at Boston last April a good schooner almost new of one hundred and twenty three tons burthen, as a lumberman and packet to pass between this port and that. She was larger than we wish'd, but after trying a month we could not procure a more convenient siz'd one but at a higher price and not so good a vessel. These circumstances, with the advice of our best friends, induced us to make this purchase. She is a good vessel and answers our purpose perfectly well. In this vessel we came from Boston on the 5th of May, and arrived the 7th, having on board every thing that was to constitute our store, materials for building, provisions and utensils for our operations, together with ten labourers, a surveyor and three chainmen, five carpenters and a mason. The remainder of the road cutters with their leader were engaged from Kennebeck. They arrived here on the 18th and on the 21st. The whole party for road making took the field. This party, consisting generally of twelve men and a leader, have compleated a road directly into the forrest, north-westerly from this place, almost twenty five miles, with bridges and causeways; on this road, at the Great Falls of Narraguagus River in No. 17, we have erected a saw mill and dam and a dwelling house in which a settler now lives with a large family. It is our intention that this settler

⁴ There is an almost identical copy of this letter in CP.

shall, the next season, raise 300 bushels of Indian corn from the lands he will burn over in the insuing spring. If this can be effected, and I have no doubt of it, this part of the country will be fled to as Egypt was from the Land of Canaan.

The carpenters have been employ'd here at this point in building a good house, making an addition to another (the one in which I live) and some little repairs to a third. This already gives an intire new appearance to the property here.

The surveyor and chainmen have been mostly employ'd in this township, in seperating your property from the settlers and the reservations with which it was incumber'd in the deeds to you. He has likewise run out the settlers lots in No. 7. This man has his family with him, and it is probable they will be settlers in this country.

The packet has been kept running from this to Boston as often as we could procure freights for her. When we came here the last May no previous collections of lumber had been made for our use, thence it was in July before she made her first freight to Boston. This evil we hope to remedy in the insuing season, but this, however, with the high price of seamen's wages, have been the reasons why so little profit has been made by this operation. The advantage of the communication between this and Boston we have enjoy'd.

The store being founded on a new principle for this country, that is, giving no credit, had many discouragements in its outsett, but you would now be astonish'd at the effect produced, by exciting an industry, unknown before, which has already cover'd our wharf and landing with shingles and laths, and which if continued to operate, will bring the inhabitants of this country to a state of civilization which gives value to the soil of any country. This operation has been attended with as much success as was expected. These several objects have chiefly taken our attention during the season, and on a review of our transactions, I feel a consciousness that more never was done with the same means in any part of the United States, and I am more and more convinced, that if you continue to operate in the same manner, you will obtain your ultimate views sooner, and at a far less expence than has attended any like operation in any part of America.

The saw mills Nos. 1 and 2 that are in this town and No. 7 were leas'd the last year under a rent that was to have been paid this last summer and fall, but from unfortunate circumstances attending the lessees we have been obliged to postpone the payment to the next season. We hope these mills in another season will be more punctual in their returns.

Timber rents—This subject, I am sensible, has ever been with me the burthen of the song, as from my first coming into the country it appeared that the practice of indiscriminately cutting timber was the vilest trespass ever committed on private rights, and it is attended with more baneful effects to the country than the Pandora's box to our cities; not however so much from the loss of the timber to the proprietors, which however is very great, as from that savageness of manners, which will be continued as long as they follow this business, and so long will be the period that the soil of this country will sell for nothing. Indians do not buy lands. I have been deceiv'd and defeated in almost every instance in which I have attempted to obtain something for the plunder committed on the forrests. Nothing as yet has been receiv'd, 'tho' some of our agents hold the obligations of these plunderers for a few hundred dollars. We still continue our regulations of this business, in hope that if we obtain but little in return, that they will gradually divert these fellows from this mode of life.

Settlers—The lots to these people in four of the six townships have been run out, and we are ready to give them deeds whenever they pay for them. Some have been deeded and advertisements have [been] posted allowing a year from last November for them to apply. The number of the inhabitants on the six townships have likewise been ascertain'd; but on this subject, if it can comport with your engagements otherwise, I would have you give yourself no trouble at present, as I conceive the time may come when you may successfully plead a remission of this settling duty on the score of your great exertions and expenditures to effect the settlement of the country far beyond others, all of whom have been exempted from this duty; and some future legislature who may be acquainted with your exertions will, I think very probably, grant your request. In any event you can but pay it at last. This opinion I gave to Mr. Richards some time since who was much pleas'd with it. He told me he should transmit to Mr. Baring.

Sale of lands—A few lots have been engaged this season, in addition to those I had engaged in the course of the two last years. None of them have receiv'd either deeds of or agreements for the lands, which however will be done in the course of the next season. The whole amount of the lands thus engaged is between two and three thousand acres, and they are to pay one dollar, one and an half dollars, two dollars, four dollars and six dollars per acre. Most of the lots are at two dollars per acre.

Your deed which I receiv'd the last spring from Shaw is now at the Register's Office at Castine, as is J. C. Jones's release of mortgage he had from General Jackson on the lands of Trenton and Mount Desert. When they are receiv'd they shall be forwarded to you.

Mr. Richards and myself are now contemplating a plan for our operations the ensuing spring, which will probably be up the Union River. As you have expressed doubts respecting your funds in future, I could wish to know your determinations as soon as possible, as measures must be taken at Boston by the beginning of April to make the necessary preparations for the campaign.

It may perhaps be necessary to mention that Mr. Codman has requested us to draw at 30 days, as it is inconvenient for him to pay on sight. This is an inconveniency to us unless he will be kind eno' to make the necessary negotiations at the bank. At the same time it subjects you to an expence of half per cent more for all the money we receive.

Among the accounts you will observe a small sketch designed as a concise view of the expences and profits of our operations; I am not certain it is right in the arrangement of the charges. If it is, you cannot be displeas'd with it, and it cannot be far from the truth if it is wrong.

Altho' late, you will permit me, with as much sincerity, to congratulate you and Mrs. Bingham on the connection of Mr. Baring with your family, to whom and Mrs. Baring please to present me very respectfully with my best wishes for their future happiness.

I am dear sir with esteem, your friend
and obedient servant
DAVID COBB

P.S. If I should be in Boston in the month of April, I will transmit you my private and loan accounts and I must then request you to advance me one thousand dollars on my next annual stipend, and which you may deposit for my use with a friend there, or in any of the banks, or you may permit me to draw for it. If in the course of the next season I should make any improvements for my use on the interior lands, and which I contemplated, the expence will be such that I shall be under the necessity of requesting your permission to take my whole stipend in the course of the year, and thereby postpone the further diminution of the loan account to the year after.

Cobb to Baring, Gouldsborough, 22 February 1799 [CP]

Alexander Baring, Esquire
Philadelphia
Dear Sir:

Gouldsboro' February 22d. 1799

Inclosed you will receive a copy of my accounts for the year 1797. They were transmitted to Mr. Bingham soon after my arrival here in

May last and I had not a doubt of their being put into your hands soon after they were received; thence you may conceive my surprise when Mr. Richards inform'd me not long since that you had again requested my accounts.

In the prosecution of any important enterprize, it is as necessary to persevere in the system of operations that have been design'd, as in the first place to form that system, and no embarrassment or hindrance whatever should be allow'd to intervene between the commencement and the final completion of the plan. To stop in any stage of the business, is to sacrifice all the expenditures prior to it; thence the necessity of making such estimates and forming such funds as may be compleatly adiquate to such enterprises prior to their commencement. I am very sensible that these observations are only common place, and I should not now have repeated them but from some little embarrassment which I feel myself under in consequence of Mr. Bingham's communications with me in which he represents the difficulty of obtaining funds for our expenditures here, in so strong a light, that I have my doubts, whether in duty to him, I ought to proceed any further in our operations. (It would be farsical to say that this difficulty of his arises from want of means to proceed; it must therefore be occasioned by one of the two following reasons: either a want of confidence in the ultimate result of the enterprize, or in a want of confidence in the agents, the former of which I suspect to be the cause.) If we should continue our operations Mr. Richards and myself have formed a plan of proceeding much the same as the last year—only directing the road making business up the Union River and to make the same establishment there as we have at the Narraguagus, and to extend the last year's road five or six miles further, into some townships of excellent land where settlements are design'd to be made. I am certain the concern cannot fail of eventual success.

I congratulate you sincerely [?] on your late connection, and you have my best wishes for your future happiness. Please to present me respectfully to Mrs. Baring.

The accounts inclos'd were a copy of those sent to William Bingham Esquire in May 1798.

[No signature]

Cobb to Bingham, Gouldsborough, 28 February 1799 [CP]

Dear Sir:

Gouldsboro' February 28th. 1799

In my letter of the 31st ultimo was inclos'd a concise view of our ex-

penditures etc., of the last year. As I find an error in that, you have now inclos'd one that is more correct.

Your Kennebec Purchase, from the best information, I have ever consider'd as a valuable tract of land, and I believe it never would have been estimated otherwise if it had not been view'd by a boy, and at a season of the year too when even Eden would have been consider'd waste. The most valuable and important agricultural settlement in the District of Maine adjoins the south west corner of this tract, the townships on the western line have been mostly sold by the government, and are now in a state of settlement, highly puff'd for the goodness of their soils, and all those of the south line are in the hands of private persons, and are likewise in a state of settlement and puffing. The lands on the eastern side have long been consider'd the best in the District; and yet this strip of 30 or 40 miles square, having one of the best and largest rivers of the country passing thro' the center of it and adjoining on three sides to land which is acknowledged to be some of the best in the country, is consider'd a poor poverty struck spot. None but fools or knaves can pretend to believe it. If you are anxious for the disposal of this property, I should suppose that Mr. Baring could point out the mode for it, as it is evident that the gentlemen for whom he before purchase'd, intended to have a larger quantity of land than has been obtain'd; and as I suppose the ill fame of this tract only prevented its sale before, that being remov'd, as it justly ought to be, why not now make the purchase if the price can be made agreeable? Mr. Richards entertains a much better opinion of this tract than what he did formerly, occasioned by information he has receiv'd here from persons who have seen it and who have no interest in defaming the property.

Your lumber has been here, on the landing, ever since last summer. No opportunity has offer'd for its conveyance and I fear none will. I know of no vessel in this part of the country that intends to visit your port the next season. To convey it to Boston and from thence ship it, will make the freight high, or to charter a vessel here and load her with that and other lumber, may perhaps be equally expensive. Under these circumstances I will wait your directions—it can be disposed of here if you do not want it.

Mr. Richards and myself have determined to pursue, in our operations the insuing year, much the same mode we did the last, only directing our road making business up the Union River, and make [?] there the same establishment as we have at Narraguagus, and to advance the last years road 5 or 6 miles further into some townships of excellent land on which settlers are to be placed. But you have express'd so many difficulties on the

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Lots bounded with yellow pine timber for sale.

X supposed to have no Timber. or none of consequence

~~time~~ Roads already opened & in use.

~~various~~ clouds proposed. -

Settlements.

Map of the Kennebec Tract in the 1820's. This map was presumably made at the time when the boom in timber lands was beginning to develop.

subject of funds, that I am in great doubt, how, in duty to you I ought to proceed. I am clear and decided that it is your highest interest for me to go on, and since the capital of the store and packet are got thro' with, I am equally certain, that your annual expence, including your agency can never exceed from three to five thousand dollars, and this, if there is any necessity for it, I would almost pledge myself to promise after another year, from our operations here. I am so clear on this subject, that in my last letter I asserted, and I do it with confidence, "that if you continue to operate as we have done the last year, you will obtain your ultimate views sooner and at a *far* less expence than has ever attended any like operation in any part of America." However, you are to say, whether this sum, however small, can be afforded, consistent with your other engagements.

[No signature]

Ross to Cobb, Union River, 7 March 1799 [CP]

Sir:

Union River 7 March 1799

I have the honor to acknowledge receipt of your favor by the mail. Am sorry to find you so lame [?] at contriving. If I was not going from home I think I could do better. On my return from Castine I will send your mutton. The mail carrier will deliver you a turkey, which is fresh and I believe a pretty good one.

I should like to have a shot at the King of Prussia thro' the medium of your brandy bottle, but the season and my being a valetudinarian prevents my taking the field.

Am much obliged by the paper you sent. The gallows have come to hand and tho' I have no ambition to be dangling at the end of it, yet it answers a good purpose.⁵

I am with much esteem dear sir
Your most obedient servant

Honorable David Cobb

D. Ross

Jackson to Cobb, Boston, 7 March 1799 [CP]

My friend David:

Boston March 7. 1799

This moment Captain Godfrey hands me your favor of the 2d ultimo and altho' of an old date it was highly pleasing and satisfactory to find you

⁵ Presumably this was a joke sent by Cobb to Ross after the latter had complained of the threats against him by the lumbermen.

so far through the winter in health and spirits. We have had one of the severest winters ever known in the memory of man, both as to the extreme cold, and the quantity of snow fallen. It has been almost one continued snow storm since November last. I never knew so much sleighing in one season, and indeed from its present appearance, it will make good the old saying, six weeks sleiding in March. The ice and snow is now one foot thick in the streets.

I think you have acted properly respecting the great man at Philadelphia; nothing but a steady and determined conduct in you, will keep him within the bounds of decency, and order. Persevere in the good work and all will come right.

Our friend HK is here. He expects to make such arrangements to be at St. Georges the last of April or beginning of May, bag and baggage and take up his residence wholly in that country. If he is able to effect this great movement it will be one of the most rational and happy operations of his life, both as it respects himself and family, for it never will do for him to go on as he has done, with the enormous expences of two families, without a permanent residence at either, and a total neglect of the immense engagements he has on hand with the Patent. He has effected a settlement with his creditors to the amount of about $2/3$ ds of his debts, by his mortgaging his land at $7/6$ per acre with our bonds payable in four years. The other $1/3$ d I suppose will come into the same measure, as in fact they cannot do anything better, and it must and ought to be perfectly satisfactory to be made secure in the payment of their debt. This business has been a very great inconvenience and mortification to me, but I am convinced the measure adopted will finally be the best for all concerned. As you regularly receive the news papers I refer you to them for the politicks of the day. Inclosed are a few of the last *Centinels*. I can also send you some of the latest *Chronicles*, but as I know the use you would put them to, I will not give you that trouble. By a late arrival at Newport from the West Indies, the captain informs that Captain Truxton in the *Constellation* had taken a French frigate of 36 guns and carried her into St. Kitts, that they fought two hours yardarm and yardarm. The French had fifty kill'd and wounded, and the *Constellation* thirteen. This is generally beleived to be true. A day or two will put this matter out of all doubt.⁶ The nomination of the President of three envoys to treat with the French Republic has given great uneasiness to a certain junto of high Federalists of the day, and who are anxious for war, rather than peace on honorable terms, but

⁶ This was the capture of the French frigate *L'Insurgente*.

the great mass of the people who are staunch and unequivocal Federalist, will support the Executive to the greatest extremity.⁷

Altho' we have had a long and cold severe winter, yet we have had a very lively and brisk one, what with the ringing of the sleigh bells, from morning to night and all night, with the immense number of sleighs and sleds load'd with the produce of country, from Lake George to the Hudson. The town has appear'd like a bee hive in one continual bus. Our balls, assembly, and plays have been kept up with great spirit without once thinking of the yellow fever of the last year or in the least prepared in body or mind for the next visitation. In short we live, as if we never expected to die. On Saturdays we keep up the old round with nearly the same faces—from ten to sixteen in number. I believe we never rise without thinking or saying something about you or Richards, sometimes a little smut with fun and good humour. I shall expect you in April, and have a bed ready for you in my room. My affectionate regards to Richards. Your friends are all well. They anticipate your visit at the time mention'd. My candle is burnt down, my paper run out, and without ink in my pen, Amen.

God bless and prosper you
[No signature]

Cobb to Isaac Parker, Gouldsborough, 12 April 1799 [CP]

Isaac Parker, Esquire,
Castine
Dear Sir:

Gouldsboro' April 12th. 1799

I have receiv'd your letter of the 9th. instant. Mr. Bingham has disposed of one undivided half of the lands he purchased of the State in the counties of Hancock and Washington to Thomas M. Willing and William Cramond, merchants of Philadelphia, the deeds of which sale you may see on record; and myself and Mr. Richards are their joint agents for the sale and management of this property. Our power you may likewise see on record. All actions therefore must be bro't in the name of William Bingham, Thomas M. Willing, and William Cramond by us their attorney's and agents. If in the prosecution of any action it should become necessary to trace back the title and to shew how Mr. Bingham holds the lands in question, it will then appear that he purchas'd of the Commonwealth in 1791 and possession was given to Colonel John Ty-

⁷ This was the commission of Oliver Ellsworth, William R. Davie, and William Vans Murray who finally reached agreement with France in 1800.

ler, who was imploy'd by Mr. Bingham and who came into this country for that purpose either in 1791 or 92;⁸ that for the greater conveniency of the parties, the property was convey'd in eight different deeds lodged in escrow, one of which was to be lifted annually on paying the sum specified. These have all been regularly taken up as by contract they became due and are now in possession of Mr. Bingham except the last, which is due the 1st. of June next and contains the lands of the Northern Division. On recollection I am not certain that these eight deeds contain more than one undivided half of the lands purchased. The other half still remains lodged in escrow for the performance of the settling duty within twelve years from the time of the purchase or to be taken up at the pleasure of the purchaser by depositing in the Treasury so much six per cent stock as the whole number of settlers will amount to at 30 dollars each. This circumstance however will probably make no essential difference. The subject of escrow has been but little known or practis'd in the law courts of our government altho' it is every day business in those of Pennsylvania, thence you will permit me to bring the subject more immediately to your investigation, by proposing the following question: whether a person in possession of property under escrow cannot legally do and perform all that a person can who is in possession of property under mortgage? and whether properly certified copies of deeds in escrow, on record do not give as legal a title to lands in possession as when under mortgage? If however you have any difficulty on the subject, the original deeds can be procured from Philadelphia before September term. Prosecutions must be commenced against these depridators or this country will be unfit for any civilized character to live in. I have persued every mild measure for three years past to no effect. We must now draw the sword of the law and we are determined to thro' away the scabbord. You must assist us and engage Wild with you.

You will observe that your actions must be founded on Bingham's deed to Willing and Cramond, and don't [?] fail of filling your court at the present term with these fellows. I shall be with you as a grand juror for the town of Gouldsborough.

Adieu.

D. C.

⁸ This is the only mention I have found of Tyler's taking possession. It must have been done for Knox and Duer, rather than for Bingham, as Cobb says, though Bingham accepts Cobb's statement in the latter's letter of 8 May 1799 (see below, p. 961) without comment, presumably acknowledging its correctness. Tyler was John Steel Tyler of Boston, who had served in Henry Jackson's regiment during the Revolution. See *Massachusetts Soldiers and Sailors of the Revolutionary War*, xvi. 235.

*David Wass to Cobb, Columbia, 19 April 1799 [CP]*⁹

Dear Sir:

Columbia April 19th 1799

As it slipt my mind when I was with you I imbrace this opertunity to inquire whether it would be agreable to you for me to pay your taxes this present year in the town of Columbia as I am owing you sumthing of a sume which I hope to have redy by the first of July next. If it should sute you pleas to write me a line. And as to my lott I have seen Mr. Tuper¹ and he saith the contents of the gore [?] at the fut of the lot is marked in its place and it may be goined to the lot or not as we pleas.

I spake to Mr. Townsly² when he was this way to know whether you had plows fit for four or six oxen. He said he would inquire and if you had any would try to send one by Mr. Todd. I have not heard from him. I am still in want of a good plow, and should be glad to have your price if you expect to have any this sumer.

From your humbele sarvant
DAVID WASS

Parker to Cobb, Castine, 24 April 1799 [CP]

Dear General:

Castine 24 April 1799

I commenced process against all the marauders on Union River whose names were transmitted by Mr. Ross. There are 15 several actions, most of which are against two joint trespassers. Lest there should be an omission of service I persuaded General Hunewell to undertake it, which as it is a pretty good job he consented to do. He returned yesterday after much fatigue having performed the whole tour on foot. He tells me that most of the persons sued are disposed to settle, especially Esquire Jones [?].³ They are to have a meeting soon and determine upon their operations. I think it probable they will conclude to treat with you. Having unfurled the standard of war, it will be for the interest of the proprietors to push hostilities with vigour, 'till submission and compensation are tendered. It will be best for Ross to summon a few of the witnesses this term. I shall

⁹ This document is included as another example of frontier letter-writing.

¹ There are a William and a Joseph Tupper listed in the census of 1790 as living in Township No. 22, the present Jonesboro.

² This was Jacob Townsley, a friend of Cobb's who lived in Steuben.

³ Possibly Theodore Jones, the only Jones listed as living in Trenton and Union River in the census of 1790.

write him to that effect. I have informed Wilde that he must hold himself in readiness.

The mail brings no late intelligence from Boston, the last mail from Portland having been interrupted at Kennebec.

Remember me to Mr. Richards. Compliments to your family.

ISAAC PARKER

Ross to Cobb, Union River, 6 May 1799 [CP]

Sir:

Union River 6th May 1799

You are by this time I presume arrived at Castine and arranging the operations of the ensuing campaign. I wish you much success.

James Hopkins, one of the men whom you have prosecuted for trespassing on the lands in No. 8 tells me he owns a hundred acre lot back of his farm which he says you can see by Mr. Peter's plan, that 'twas from that he logged; and that if he encroached on the proprietor's lands, he conceived it was on Mr. La Roche, and was safe having made application to La Roche's agent for the purchase of an other hundred acres contiguous to what he now possesses.⁴ Be it as it will he says he is willing if the land is yours to purchase it, or if he has transgressed to make amends without a litigation at law. He required me to write you on the subject and wishes you not to enter the action against him, being willing to comply with any reasonable terms. Having fulfilled my promise to him, I leave the rest to your better judgement. I hope you will be able to carry on the war successfully, with as little retrospect [*sic*] as possible to me. I have already got so unpopular that tho' my carcase is hardly fit for the crows to pick, yet many of my old neighbours woud think me a delicious morsel without either salt or mustard.

As you will most probably be at General Hunnewills, you will oblige me by presenting him my best respects; that I can now most cordially (from reading the Secretary of States letter in Philadelphia) congratulate him on his army appointment, it carrying something solid with it; that I will think it no sin to quarter myself on him at least for one month this summer; and that I hope he will be always armed cap apee and ready to repel the King of Pruss from his dominions.⁵

⁴ There is a James Hopkins listed in the census of 1790 as living in Trenton.

⁵ These references to "repelling" and "shooting at" the King of Prussia appear to be the eighteenth-century equivalent of the more modern "striking a blow for liberty." In each case the ammunition came out of a bottle.

I am with respect and much esteem

Dear sir

Your most obedient servant

DONALD ROSS

Honorable David Cobb, Esquire

*Cobb to Bingham, Castine, 8 May 1799 [BP]*⁶

Castine May 8th. 1799

Dear Sir:

I am at this place attending the Court of Common Pleas for the county, to which we have bro't a number [of] actions against the people of Union River for trespassing upon the lands. After making use of every mild and persuasive measure with these people for three years past, to no effect, and after the breach of every promise they have heretofore made, we have been compell'd to resort to this painfull and troublesome mode. Some of them that are prosecuted will probably stand tryal, under an idea that you have no just claim to the property. However preposterous this is, it will require your forwarding to me your original deeds that have been lifted from the Commonwealth (this is the opinion of Mr. Parker our attorney). Those on record here are only copies of deeds in escrow. The townships on which these trespasses have been committed are Nos. 8, 14, 20, and 26, Middle Division, and are contain'd in the 1st, 2d or 3d of the original deeds. I recollect that Colonel Tyler was employ'd by you to take possession of this property, but I know of no record of this fact or any paper relative to it. If you have any such, this will likewise be necessary. As we have now begun with prosecutions we shall proceed thro' the tract to Passamaquoddy, for unless we can git unmolested possession of this property, it can be of no use to the concern.

I should have been very happy in receiving your approbation of our intended plan of operations, up the Union River, the insuing season, which was mentioned in my last, and I have been anxiously waiting for your letter on the subject. The season has now arrived for opening the campaign, and if any of our proceedings here should not meet with your intire approbation, it would be extreemly painfull to me.

I have receiv'd a letter from Doctor Cony who wishes to know by what mode a quarter of a township near the south west corner of the Kennebeck purchase could be obtain'd, and at what price, as a number of settlers want to purchase it. This tract is very valuable and requires attention.

⁶ There is a practically identical copy of this letter in CP dated 9 May instead of 8 May.

I came from Gouldsboro' the 4th. where I left Mr. Richards in health and good spirits, attending to our concerns there, and cutting away the spruces for his farming improvements. Our business is such that both cannot be absent. Our packet has returned from Boston by this time, as she sail'd from Gouldsboro' more than a fortnight since. By her some labourers will be receiv'd, and as soon as the weather will permit our surveyors and road cutters will be at their work.

Soon after my return to Gouldsboro' you shall hear from me again.

I am dear sir, with esteem and
respect your obedient servant

DAVID COBB

*Cobb to Bingham, Gouldsborough, 16 May 1799 [BP]*⁷

Dear Sir:

Gouldsboro' May 16th. 1799

I returned from Castine on the 13th. The actions bro't against the Union River people are continued to September term. Their opposition to your right of soil is a meer pretext, and I have no doubt, that before the next winter they will all come forward for settlement. Whether they do or not, they shall pay smart money sufficient to convince them of the folly of interfering with others rights, and in future be deprived of the only mode which they have depended upon for subsistance. But in any event, it will be absolutely necessary to forward the original deeds from the Commonwealth and such other papers as you may think usefull.

Inclosed you have my private and loan accounts for the last year, and the deed from Shaw of the last purchases. J. C. Jones's release of the mortgage on Trenton and Mt. Desert is to General Jackson.⁸ To him I shall forward it, as he has already deeded this property with warrantee to you.

Our packet in my absence returned from Boston, and unfortunately bro't us no labourers for our operations here. The person on whom we depended to procure them, had disappointed us. I shall go up in the packet to Boston where I shall remain 'till her return on the next trip, and I have particularly to request your attention in forwarding a letter to me there, soon after your receipt of this, that I might know whether I

⁷ There is a practically identical copy of this letter in CP.

⁸ Presumably this was the mortgage which De Gregoire placed on his property to gain funds and which was paid off when the sale to Henry Jackson was made. See above, p. 802, note 1.

have your permission to draw for any part of my stipend, as I requested in my letter of the 31st January last.

I am dear sir with esteem and respect
Your obedient servant

DAVID COBB

Honorable William Bingham

Cobb to Ross, Gouldsborough, 18 May 1799 [CP]

Gouldsboro' May 18th. 1799

Dear Ross:

Inclosed you will receive fifty dollars on account of your attention to our business at Union River. Your letter of the 6th instant was receiv'd at Castine. The action against James Hopkins was not enter'd. The rest were, and are continued to September term, and then, if your good people cannot obtain such evidence as will thoughtly [*sic*] convince them that the property up Union River is not theirs, they may have them continued farther. We have no objection to their having time for compleat conviction on this subject, as their being hereafter intirely excluded from logging, will thereby set on their stomachs.

You must cease your fears about your popularity—unless you wish to be chosen representative of a Plantation that has no right to representation, and you must proceed to let out to the persons who have heretofore occupied them, all the meadows up the River, at a reasonable price for the hay per ton, say 1 dollar. If you think this too much, or too [?] little, you may diminish or advance it. But the meadows are to be cut only by your permission, and all those who do it without, shall be prosecuted. You will except the two settlers who live on No. 14. We think you had better advertize this regulation and proceed without fear.

I sail for Boston tomorrow and intend to be with you the last of June, God willing. Perhaps Mr. Richards may see you in my absence.

D. C.

Donald Ross, Esquire
Union River

Bingham to Knox, Philadelphia, 25 May 1799 [KP]⁹

Dear General: Philadelphia May 25th 1799

By the greatest exertion and with difficulties almost insuperable, I have

⁹ KP, XLII. 86.

at length accomplished the payment of the last installment due to the State of Massachusetts, amounting to \$32,802.

When the best notes of this place are discounted at the rate of $2\frac{1}{2}$ -3 per cent per month, you may readily conceive the prostrate state of all monied operations. This unfortunate situation of things is principally owing to the immense subscriptions made to the loan, which the speculators cannot dispose of without incurring a very heavy loss. The conversion of so large an active stock into a dead capital, is the cause of this alarming scarcity of money.¹

I inclosed Mr. Coffin, the Treasurer of the State,² a draft for this payment, which I should have transmitted to you, but from an apprehension that you had taken your departure for St. Georges, where I am informed you were to spend your summer. I had desired him to deliver the bonds duly cancelled to you, which I request you immediately to forward to me. I shall write Mr. Coffin to day, to deliver the bonds to Mr. Codman, in case of your absence.

In my letter of 24 January last,³ I expressed to you my sentiments relative to the disposal of this property, and mentioned an opinion of the unfavorable tendency of a delay, which every days experience impresses more strongly.

I expected you would have communicated your ideas fully on this subject, and that as you possess more local knowledge of this species of property than any other person, you would have furnished me with essential information and a variety of documents, in order to enable me more readily and successfully to effect the sale. I find from every quarter that intelligence can be derived, that the Kennebec tract is very much exposed to depredations, and I wished much to afford it protection by having a superintendant, to whose care it might be committed, and whose recompence would not probably exceed a few hundred dollars per annum. But however desirous of making such an arrangement, I have not been able to meet with a proper character, who is resident on the spot, or its neighbourhood.

If there had been any probability of meeting with purchasers in your

¹ This must refer to Hamilton's original loans. While there were temporary loans throughout the 1790's, there were no long-term ones of any consequence until 1800. See D. R. Dewey, *Financial History of the United States*, 113.

² Peleg Coffin of Nantucket, who had recently succeeded Thomas Davis as Treasurer of Massachusetts. See A. Starbuck, *History of Nantucket*, *passim*.

³ This letter is in KP, XLII. 33. In it Bingham again speaks of the necessity of selling the Kennebec tract and expresses interest in Knox's program for building frigates for the federal government.

State, I am persuaded that you would have informed thereof. I had reason to suppose that this circumstance might have happened, as you informed me that lands were very much appreciating in value, that were situated in the District of Maine.

I shall immediately carry into operation the measures I projected, with respect to the accomplishment of a sale, on the best possible terms, and I wish the most ample communications from you on the subject. If I am under the necessity of selling on low terms, I will endeavor to reserve part of the eventual profits that may arise in the course of a limited number of years, as well as to reserve the right to the parties of repurchasing, within a certain period, a portion of the same. If I cannot by any means effect a sale, without incurring a loss, I will then use every effort to borrow money, by mortgaging the property. Considering the taxes that these lands will be exposed to⁴ and the difficulty of preventing depredations on them, which destroy their value, it appears most obviously the interest of the parties, to dispose of them as soon as possible, for it is evident that they can only be turned to account, by being divided into small parcels, and forming settlements thereon. The expence of this process is immense. Besides the salary of our two agents, there have been expended for last years operations, upwards of \$20,000 and I can see no prospect of any available returns from the sales to settlers for a considerable time to come.

No fortune in this country can support the heavy anticipations which a number of such settlements would necessarily occasion, whatever might be the prospects of eventual advantage.

General Cobb writes me that the Kennebec tract is very valuable and requires attention. I wish every proof and authentic document of the value could be collected and forwarded to me, as it might enable me to obtain a better price. Can you indicate to me the mode of obtaining such evidences?

General Cobb informs me that Dr. Coney has applied for a quarter of a township (but does not mention the price he is disposed to give), but such small and partial sales would injure the sale of the whole tract, from a supposition that the most chosen spots had been selected and disposed of.

I should be happy to hear from you as soon as possible and am with sincere regard.

My dear General

Yours etc. etc.

WM. BINGHAM

⁴ According to the original contract with the state, the lands were to be exempt from state taxes for ten years. This meant that taxes would be levied in 1801.

P.S. General Cobb and Mr. Richards both write me that, considering the great and very expensive efforts that have been made to improve these lands and to obtain settlers thereon, it is very probable that the legislature might be prevailed on to release us from the settling duties which would enable me to possess myself of the remaining deeds. I wish your opinion on this subject and how far you think them justified in their opinions. An attempt, if there is any prospect of success, should at least be made and as much interest as possible procured to support it. There can be no argument opposed to it, from the profits that the parties have made by the purchase, for, taking into consideration the relative value of money, the lands would not bring first cost.

General Knox

Bingham to Cobb, Philadelphia, 3 June 1799 [CP]

Dear General:

Philadelphia June 3d 1799

I have to acknowledge receipt of several of your letters, which from various circumstances I have omitted to reply to.

I observe your exertions in the course of the last season have not been attended with all the advantages which you promised, and which might have been expected from so large an expenditure of money. I hope that no untoward events will intervene to blast our hopes with respect to the progress of the ensuing year.

At this distance, and without a personal attention to the object, it is useless to enter into a detail of opinion with respect to the various operations that you are engaged in. Your judgment and experience must govern your conduct, and I have no doubt you will exercise your discretion so as to promote our best interests.

There are some points, however, on which a comment may with propriety be made.

You mention that you have ascertained the number of inhabitants on the six townships, but you have omitted the report of their amount, which would determine how far my obligation to the State was cancelled on that score. If you are well founded in your expectations of obtaining a remission of the settling duties, from the plea of great exertions to improve these lands, would it not be proper to make an immediate application to the legislature? If all others have been exempted from the payment, it would be peculiarly partial and unjust to compel us to liquidate this claim, who have expended more actual funds in promoting settlement than any

other or perhaps all the purchasers of lands from the State. Should General Knox be at Boston, I wish you to consult him on this subject, and procure his aid and cooperation in facilitating the success of the measure. It will be a saving to the concern of more than 70,000 dollars.

I am very anxious to see a greater progress made in the sale of the lands to actual settlers. I expected your packet would be continually conveying to you persons of this description. The independence of St. Domingo and the intercourse which will arise out of it, which must create a great demand for the various articles which your country produces, afford uncommon encouragement for new settlers. I wish to see all the expences of the settlement arise from the receipt of sales made of the lands.

I must request you to forward as soon as convenient Shaw's deed to me, as well as J. C. Jones's release of mortgage.

I observe that Mr. Richards and yourself contemplate a plan of operations which has in view a settlement on Union River. I was much pleased with the lands in that district, both with regard to quality of soil and facility of communication. Van Berckel's claim will be extinguished from the entire failure of Walker's conditions. A suit in Chancery has been instituted for the recovery of the deed that was lodged in escrow, and I have no doubt of being speedily in possession of the same. There is a very large body of most excellent meadows on the margin of this river which ought to be parcelled out in such manner as to prevent any monopoly of the same. Each farm should be accommodated with a portion and a considerable quantity retained to be disposed of at a future period, when by the settlement of the surrounding country, the lands shall have greatly risen in value.

I cannot resist the impression made by your declaration and assurances relative to the immense advantages resulting from the continuance of your operations for another year, and the confidence with which you assert that after that period, you will be able to procure from the resources of sales, the necessary funds to continue the system of improvement. I shall therefore concert with Mr. Baring the means of furnishing the necessary sum, to be placed at yours and Mr. Richards disposal.

The inconvenience and almost insurmountable difficulty of procuring money at the present moment, when commercial and other speculations have carried discounts to 3 per cent per month, operate very strongly against a system of extensive improvements, which require heavy advances, especially when taken into connection with the large sums required for the payment of the annual installments to the State, which cannot be dispensed with, but by exposing us to the necessity of appearing

before the legislature, to solicit an indulgence, which would be putting too much at risk, by placing us in their power.

I wish you would inform me in what manner I can most safely and effectually forward to you the deeds you want, in order to exhibit proof of the property of these lands being vested in me. I hope you will not have occasion for them any length of time, as it is not agreeable to have such valuable records exposed to casualties. Would not a certificate of the Treasurer that he had received the amount of the consideration money that the deeds expressed or a certificate of the persons who held them in escrow, that on my compliance with the terms expressed in the obligation, they had delivered me these deeds, be a legal proof of my possession of this property?

Your letter of the 16th ultimo from Gouldsborough, which you mention in that of the 25th from Boston,⁵ has not reached me.

I am not disposed to part with a quarter of a township of land at the southwest corner of the Kennebec tract, which Dr. Cony enquires the price of, as I think it might have a tendency to injure the sale of the remainder, by impressing an idea that this was a favorable spot, selected from the tract. It would not be amiss to procure an offer from the settlers in question, which would furnish some data, by which to estimate the value of these lands.

I wish you, whilst at Boston, to converse with General Knox on this subject, and indicate to him the means of procuring the best and most explicit documents in recommendation of this tract. I have wrote to him several times on the subject, and it has become a very pressing as well as interesting business, that such proof should be obtained and forwarded as early as possible. I am fully convinced that we cannot expect a more favorable moment for the sale of this property, and my reasons for such an opinion I have fully detailed to General Knox.

No well founded opinion can be anticipated with respect to the result of such a sale. Much will depend on placing, by incontestible evidence, these lands, in their true point of view. I fully coincide with you in opinion with regard to their value, and am well persuaded, that in the possession of a company, which would expend the necessary sums for their settlement and improvement, they would become eventually a mine of wealth, altho the receipts might not be very extensive for the first few years.

I have endeavoured by various means to estimate with precision the

⁵ This letter, dated 26 May 1796, is in CP. In it Cobb reports from Boston on his attempts to get workmen to go down east.

price at which these lands should be offered, but have been baffled in all my efforts. General Dearborn promised me a sketch of the value of lands that are settled on the river, according to their respective quality, which would indicate some ideas relative to those that are unimproved.⁶ But he has probably been too much engaged or have forgotten the subject. I have been equally unsuccessfull with respect to an application of the same nature to Mr. Benjamin Vaughan thro' his brother John Vaughan.⁷

I agree with you that this tract is valuable and requires attention, but being unacquainted with all the characters who reside in the neighbourhood, I know no person to whom I could make a proposition to superintend it. I could with vastly more ease, manage and do justice to ten times the quantity of lands in this or the adjoining states.

I wish some person of credit, who had viewed these lands could give a certificate of their situation and quality. It might have a favorable effect in counteracting the report that was made by Cazenove's agents, which has made a strong impression in Europe, which it will be difficult to eradicate.

I shall have the pleasure of again writing to you before your departure from Boston and am with sincere regard

Dear sir

Yours etc.

WM. BINGHAM

General Cobb

Cobb to Bingham, Boston, 16 June 1799 [CP]

Boston June 16th. 1799

Dear Sir:

On my return here from a small excursion into the country, I found your kind favour of the 3d.

The idea I intended to communicate in my late observations on the mode of obtaining a liberation from the duty of settlement on the lands of your purchase and which I observe by your letter you do not comprehend was by an application to the legislature in some *future* period, after you had made those expenditures and exertions that are at present contemplated, and made too in such a manner that the public mind would be possess'd of the fact. When this has been done you may come forward with a tolerable certainty of success, but to apply now to the legislature on

⁶ General Henry Dearborn had been much interested in speculation in Maine Lands in the early 1790's. See above, p. 65.

⁷ For John Vaughan, see R. H. Gardiner, *Early Recollections*, 119-120.

this subject will be attended not only with an absolute refusal of your request, but, in my opinion will be a compleat stopper to your ever successfully making the like application in future, if it do not excite a demand upon you now for what is already become due.

In conducting the business of your contracts for the settlement of the lands, I have for some time past kept in view that period at which you must come forward and shew that you have placed on the lands the number of settlers required or pay for the deficiency or obtain a remission of the forfeiture thereby incurred; thence you will observe that as your contract for the settlement of the six townships demands the last instalment of settlers to be on these lands in 1798, I have taken that year to enumerate those settlers, agreeably to that direction of the late Treasurer of the Commonwealth, and which amount to 110, that hereafter, if you should finally be obliged to pay for the deficiency, the number can be precisely ascertained. This enumerated list I have now with me, but I think it best not to communicate it to the Treasurer, for if in consequence of it, you should be call'd upon to take up your deeds now lodged by paying for the deficient settlers, you would thereby establish such a president as would probably exclude any prospect of success in a future application for a remission of a like deficiency, in your contract for the two millions of acres. On the whole, as the government at present are asleep on this subject, it is certainly your interest not to rouse them [from] their slumber.

Nothing less than the original deeds of your purchase can be admitted in evidence to prove the right of property (soil) [*sic*] to be in you, as the best evidence the nature of the case can admit must be produced; if these deeds were lost or destroyed and proof of this fact was ascertain'd, then the copies of record would be the best evidence, and would be admitted accordingly; but so long as the originals are in existence they must be produced. The best mode of conveying these deeds would be by requesting some gentleman of your city that may be coming this way, to take charge of them to be deliver'd to Mr. Codman or General Jackson, who will see them forwarded to us by our packett or in any other mode you may direct. If I should meet any gentleman going from this place to your city, I will request him to call on you for this purpose. In any event it will be necessary that these deeds are with me in Maine by the middle of August, otherwise I shall be obliged to send an express to you for them, as they are to be used in the second week of September next.

I have convers'd with General Knox on the subject of the Kennebeck Purchase. He thinks that an agent should be appointed to reside upon the lands, to take care of them, prevent waists, and by his residence to habit

the people to the idea of your possession of them, this agent to have a stipend of 500 dollars per annum or less, if a good man can be obtain'd for it, and a place built for his residence. This mode is certainly the first thing you have to do; and you then may determine whether you will dispose of the lands in groce or proceed to the settlement of them in sales by retail. If certifiates [*sic*] of respectable characters are wanted as to the quality of this tract of land, it will be necessary that some gentleman at Hallowell or from other parts of the River, should be invited to a pleasurable tour up the Kennebeck for ten days or more with proper boats and supplies for the purpose, that they may have an oppertunity of seeing the tract of which you want their certificates; but my private opinion is that the period has arrived in which such certificates or the most elegantly painted maps of countries have ceas'd of their effects in the sale of such property. It is certainly high time that some attention should be paid to this tract of land, and I think you ought not to hesitate in the sale of it, either in small or large tracts whenever purchasers offer, and let them take what lands they please. From those who purchase farms only I would now demand a dollar per acre, and from those who purchase larger tracts, such as townships or parts of townships, I would take less; always having surveyors at hand who can ascertain the quantity sold, and mark on the map the place where; and whenever an oppertunity offer'd for the sale of the whole, or to companies in which you may take a part I would always embrace it; and you may be assured that your partial sales thus previously made, so far from diminishing the value of the tract, will very greatly enhance it.

As the public appear to be contemplating the establishment of naval posts, and no doubt the executives have frequent conversations on this subject, has it ever occur'd to you that the port of Gouldsboro' is one of the best ship harbours in the United States, and having a better tide than any other, unless you go farther east up the Bay of Fundy? The tides are from 15 to 20 and 22 feet.

If you could remit to me a portion of my stipend I should be gratified, but I shall not draw for it, without your particular direction. I shall return to Gouldsboro' in the course of a fortnight.

D. C.

[On reverse side, crossed out]

110 settlers

The omission of the number of settlers took place from the idea that the deeds lodged for the performance of the settling duty were to remain at present unnoticed, that in some future day, after your contemplated ex-

penditures in that country have been made, and made in such a manner that the public mind is acquainted with the fact, you might apply, with a probability of success for a liberation from that duty etc.—a certainty of denial if now applied for.

I never had an idea that our packett was to convey settlers in ship loads to the lands. Before such event can take place, it is necessary that the lands and country should be known, with this communication from Boston, and time only can bring this about.

I am happy to hear that Van Burkells claim is in any progress for being destroyed.

The best mode of conveying the deeds will be by some gentleman coming this way. If any goes from here I will request him to take that trouble. If they do not arrive before my departure, let General Jackson convey them or Mr. Codman. No certificate will do if the deeds are in existence.

Bingham to Cobb, Philadelphia, 3 July 1799 [CP]

Dear General:

Philadelphia July 3, 1799

I received your favor of the 16 June dated at Boston.

I observe that an application to be made to the legislature for an exemption from the settling duties would at present be premature, and that it is your opinion that in order to insure its success, a more forcible impression with respect to the importance of our exertions should be made upon the public mind. It becomes necessary therefore to wait for a more convenient opportunity. If others, who have contracted little expence and made but slight efforts, have obtained an exemption, we certainly have well founded pretensions to it, who have made such large expenditures.

In the mean time, I think it essentially expedient that an enumeration should be made, in due and proper form, in order to substantiate the number of settlers and gain the deduction to which we are entitled.

I have not been able to procure a safe conveyance for the original deeds. I wish you had mentioned the particular deeds, which contemplated the lands in contest as the whole of them will take up considerable space. You will likewise recollect, that altho all the lands are paid for, according to contract, that deeds but for half the quantity have been delivered, the remainder of them, being retained as security for the payment of the settling duties. I shall continue my attention to providing a suitable conveyance for them to Boston.

I thank you for your sentiments concerning the Kennebec tract. I am well persuaded that it is necessary to have a superintendant placed thereon

immediately, to whom a salary should be allowed for his care and attention. He should reside on the tract and make frequent reports of all matters that touch our interests concerning it. I have urged this measure to General Knox, and expected that he would have recommended a suitable person for the occasion, as it is impossible that I should be acquainted with proper characters, who reside in the District. I shall write to General Knox again on the subject.

I am very anxious to bring this property into a state of high repute, which it so deservedly merits, in order to dispose of it, to the best advantage.

Without good recommendations and support, I question whether much more than first cost can be obtained for it.

I shall see the Secretary of the Navy and endeavor to procure his attention to Gouldsborough, as one of the naval ports of the United States.⁸

You can draw upon me for five hundred dollars and I will endeavor to remit you an equal sum in a short time. I was never more pressed for funds than at the present moment. If you find a difficulty in drawing, I will remit you a draft on the Branch Bank at Boston, which will be exposed to no loss or deduction.

Mr. Baring will write to Mr. Codman, to hold an additional credit, at yours and Mr. Richards' disposal. I flatter myself that the progress you will make in meliorating the condition of our lands, during the course of the present year, will render any future advances unnecessary, and that the expenditures will be provided out of the receipts.

I am with sincere regard

Dear General

Yours, etc.

WM. BINGHAM

General Cobb

*Bingham to Knox, Lansdowne, 12 July 1799 [KP]*⁹

Lansdown July 12th 1799

My dear General:

I have received your letter of the 30 June. I fully coincide with you in opinion relative to the natural progress of population, and that the

⁸ There is in CP an undated document in Cobb's hand which explains the methods by which the harbor of Gouldsborough might be improved. Since it speaks of the need of establishing a regular packet, it must have been written before 1798, but it is additional proof of Cobb's hopes that Gouldsborough might one day become a great port down east.

⁹ KP, XLII, 101.

Kennebec tract has a fair chance of attracting a full portion of settlers.

But the principal object is to place these lands in such a point of view as to recommend them to purchasers, who will undertake the expence and trouble of forming establishments on them, when, it is possible, your ideas may be justified in the result, with respect to the price that may be eventually obtained for them, by such an operation. But this is a very slow process, and will require an immense expence in advances, for a considerable number of years, before any return can be expected. My experience convinces me, that none but monied men, with overgrown capitals, should attempt such enterprizes. Their posterity, if not themselves, will be fully recompenced, in the course of time, for their labor and expenditures. I am trying the experiment on a large scale, with the lower tract, and I am sufficiently possessed of data, to form an accurate opinion, of the termination of this business.

I have always supposed you too sanguine on the subject of lands, not calculating on the various other objects that more powerfully attracted capital towards them, and which occasioned lands to be relatively of very little value. Our speculation has in a great measure failed, by not forcing a sale, at a period when such property was in higher repute, than at present. I wish I could find some monied men who would take these lands at a low rate, contracting to divide the profits, that may eventually attend them, with the present proprietors. There is certainly some consideration to be paid to the operation of public opinion with respect to those who hold immense bodies of land, who do not receive the same degree of protection for their property, as those who are reduced to a more humble scale of possessions.

The sooner a division is made of such large tracts, the less you expose the proprietors to the emotions of envy and frequently to acts of injustice, which unfortunately are too prevalent towards large proprietors, under republican governments.

I wish you would indicate to me, a person in whom sufficient confidence could be placed, that would be suitable for the agency of the Kennebec tract. I agree with you that [it] is essentially necessary to have a superintendant to reside thereon, who would watch over the interests of the owners, and convey to them every species of usefull information. Would you recommend an advertisement in the public papers, for the purpose of obtaining such a character, or could a proper person be procured in any other manner? My distance incapacitates me from making such enquiries as would lead to a successfull result.

I will write to General Cobb on the subject of the road from the Penob-

scot to join that extended from Gouldsbrough. I am fully impressed with its advantages. I wish you to inform me, whether enquiries made of Mr. Benjamin Vaughan, relative to the Kennebec tract, would not be attended with advantages, as his name is well known in Europe.

With my best compliments to Mrs. and Miss Knox, believe me to be with regard

Yours etc.

WM. BINGHAM

General Knox

Ross to Cobb, Union River, 1 August 1799 [CP]

Dear Sir:

Union River 1 August 1799

Permit me to return you my best thanks for your very beautiful favor of the 18th ultimo which I woud with pleasure have acknowledged long e'er now, had I not known of your absence from home. Am very happy to hear of your safe return and anticipate the pleasure of soon seeing you at Union River.

Your instructions respecting the meadows I have complied with, which give the gentlemen loggers much umbrage. A few who were not tress-passers say they will apply for permission, rather than risque a prosecution. The season for fresh haying is not yet come on. When it does I will be able to discriminate the sheep from the goats.

My lambs are in good order, the young turks growing up for the knife, and my mongrels fit for the spit. I wish you to make a trial. Believe me to be

Dear sir with much respect and esteem

Your most obedient servant

DONALD ROSS

Honorable David Cobb, Esquire
Gouldsbrough

Bingham to Cobb, Lansdowne, 3 August 1799 [CP]

Dear General:

Lansdown August 3 1799

General Knox in a letter I lately received from him, made known his own and your sentiments, relative to the measures most likely to insure a successfull operation for the Kennebec tract. He dwells particularly on the necessity of engaging a capable, prudent and industrious character,

well acquainted with the local state and resources of the country, who should reside on these lands, and have a general superintendance over them.

He would thereby be enabled to examine and report on the qualities of their soil and the advantages of their situation and prevent any depredations from being committed on the property by the spoliations of lumber or forcible settlement.

I am well aware of the advantages that will result from the adoption of such a measure, but I am entirely ignorant of the persons, who are possessed of suitable qualifications to undertake such a charge, and to whom I might make application.

Your vicinity to these lands will enable you to make proper enquiries of characters most likely to answer the purpose; which I shall thank you to do in as ample a manner as possible, the result of which you will please to communicate, as well denoting the persons as the terms on which they might be engaged.

I have been informed, that Mr. Benjamin Vaughan, after finishing his political career, has established his family on the Kennebec.

I think he must be a valuable acquisition to that part of the country, as he is possessed of a great variety of very usefull information. If he could be induced to make known his opinion of these lands, it might be very usefull, as relative to the impression, to be made thereby, in the minds of European purchasers. I have no doubt that he entertains the most favorable ideas of this country and its present as well as future advantages.

Since the intercourse, which has been opened with St. Domingo, the District of Maine will enjoy uncommon benefits, as it furnishes such a great proportion of the articles necessary for the island consumption.¹ Lumber in particular and of all kinds will be in great demand, which renders it more expedient to prevent the spoliations, which are continually committing on it. I was highly pleased at the establishment of a bank at Portland.² I wish another could be fixed at Wiscasset as well as one at Castine.

Wherever there is an active trade, some what extensive, banks are of immense utility by furnishing a circulating medium and a commercial capital, on the cheapest terms.

By forming the bank on such a scale as to suit the quantum of business

¹ Limited commercial relations had recently been established with the government of Toussaint L'Ouverture in Haiti.

² This bank was established 15 June 1799. See W. W. Chadbourne, *A History of Banking in Maine, 1799-1930*, *University of Maine Studies*, 2nd Series, No. 37, 13.

to be transacted thro' its intervention, no danger to its credit can ever be apprehended, especially when placed under the direction of discreet managers.

I shall be grateful at hearing from you, as soon as convenient, on these several points, which I have recommended to your attention.

Your draft for \$500 will be duly honoured. I have forwarded the deeds you requested, which you will please to return me as soon as they have served the purposes you intended.

I am with great regard

Dear General

Yours, etc.

WM. BINGHAM

General Cobb

Bingham to Cobb, Lansdowne, 13 August 1799 [CP]

Lansdown August 13th 1799

Dear Sir:

I hope you have duly received the deeds which I forwarded to General Jackson, to be conveyed to you in a safe and expeditious manner.

You will please to pay particular attention to their safety and return them as soon as possible.

You will inform me of the result of the trial, whenever the suit is determined against these plunderers.

I feel very strongly the necessity of making some essential arrangements with respect to the Kennebec tract, as well from pecuniary considerations on account of the heavy advances I have made, as the actual state of these lands, which require immediate inspection and an active superintendence.

If it would not too much interfere with the pursuit of the objects in which you may be at present engaged, I should be happy that you could make an excursion to the Kennebec, and from observation and enquiries be able to ascertain the value and peculiar advantages of these lands, as well as their susceptibility of being settled, from the increasing population and progress of improvements in the surrounding country. I have had such a high character given to me of these lands, from various quarters, that I feel very anxious to have the information investigated, that I may be enabled to draw from them those resources which they are calculated to afford, by the adoption of the most eligible plan for the disposal of them.

On such a visit, you would have an opportunity, by the information

you would obtain, of making arrangements with a suitable person, who would agree to superintend this property, and prevent the spoliations which will naturally be committed on it, if not prevented by the interference of an agent duly authorized for this purpose.

There should be some weight of character attached to such a person, in order that he may be enabled properly to enforce his views. His time would not be much employed on the objects, as I do not think it altogether necessary that he should reside on the lands, altho he should be in the neighbourhood of them. However, it absolutely requires a visit to the spot, in order to obtain local knowledge and information, for the purpose of deciding on these essential points.

I will thank you to make known to me as soon as possible, whether it will be convenient to you to make this excursion, and in case, you should do it, I must request you to be very particular in your enquiries and in the report you make of it.

Remember me affectionately to Richards. I shall write to him very shortly.

I am with great regard

Dear sir

Yours, etc.

WM. BINGHAM

General Cobb

Ross to Cobb, Union River, 29 August 1799 [CP]

Dear Sir:

Union River 29th August 1799

I had the pleasure of receiving your favor of the 18th instant on the 26th. I will pay particular attention to your request respecting the business you mention, of which I will more minutely confer with you, should I have the pleasure of seeing you on the 2d [?] at [?] Hardisons.³

That you may not be unprepared, I think best to acquaint you, that an embassy is in preparation, to wait on you soon, with a view to settle the suits commenced by you against the loggers. If it can be done to your mind I wish much it would take place, tho' I have a wish to see you much, before 'tis concluded and for several reasons, that is immaterial now to mention.

The hay cutters in general have taken permissions to cut and given me their obligations to be accountable for the number of tons mentioned in their permits at the rate of seventy five cents per ton. Ninety eight tons

³ Probably the home of either Nathaniel or Stephen Hardison, both of whom lived in Sullivan according to the census of 1790.

is the total number of tons, for which permissions have been issued. Some cut without permission; *they* are a few only and those of the most rigid in the log business. A few others called in my absence under a pretence of obtaining permits and promised or rather left word at the house that on their return they would call and settle for what hay they got.

I am with much esteem

Dear sir

Your most obedient servant

DONALD ROSS

Honorable David Cobb, Esquire

Knox to Cobb, Thomaston, 6 September 1799 [CP]

Thomaston 6 September 1799

We really seem my dear Cobb, to be at an immense distance from each other. If we cannot visit each other let me have the satisfaction of hearing from you now and then.

I have been here and hereabouts since the 24th of July. I cannot but be satisfied at the situation and prospects of things generally, relatively to myself. My people are satisfied, and great appetite exists for lands, in this quarter, by people of New Hampshire. All people who desire cheap lands I recommend to you. I see no cause to disbelieve that I may obtain five dollars for all the lands in the incorporated towns, and in populous plantations, as easily as I could one dollar. The settlers on the Patent who want more land do not hesitate at this price. We have had an abundant crop of hay this season, and hope for after grass but hitherto it has been pinched by the drought. The want of water has also occasioned my mills to be mostly unemployed. But we expect to do much this fall having a great stock of logs on hand.

You must project and execute a visit to us—Mrs. Knox and my daughter want nothing but society. If you cannot come pray entreat Richards to visit us alone. We regret the loss of Mr. Wild and family.⁴ They passed two days with us on their passage. My respects to Mrs. Cobb and your family.

Your sincere friend

H. KNOX

General Cobb

⁴ Samuel S. Wilde, Cobb's son-in-law, and his family had just moved from Warren to Hallowell.

Ross to Cobb, Union River, 16 September 1799 [CP]

Union River 16th September 1799

Dear Sir:

On my arrival home yesterday from a jaunt to Mount Desert I found Mr. Peters had left a message desiring I would send Fabrique over to you—and also to have a batteau to take you from Webbs Brook to morrow.⁵ Mr. Fabrique is from home. Have therefore concluded to send the bearer Jordan⁶ with this letter, that you might not remain in suspence and that if you had any occasion for his service he might accompany you to Webbs Brook, where a batteau will meet you to morrow about noon and will wait till night should you not appear sooner or send counter orders to day.

There has been a farmer to see me. He understood you was about commencing a settlement up this river and held out great encouragement. I told him he [should] not amuse himself with hopes of any thing but good land and that for good pay. He has been up as far as Debicks [?] ⁷ and is determined, if you'll allow him, to settle about Webbs or the Western Branch. He appears to be a farmer bred. He has three stout sons that he will take with him, exclusive of one that is married and will also accompany him. They have got a small stock of cattle also. He is now returned to Sedgewick his place of abode and will wait on you at Castine. His name is Emerson.⁸ The idea struck me that you might find him a serviceable man. His character can be known by enquiring of Mr. Lee⁹ on whose farm he lived several years.

I have settled with a few of the loggers and others woud settle but that they have an idea of obtaining better terms from you.

Mr. Moon¹ who will meet you at Webbs will have a bottle of brandy

⁵ Webb's Brook, situated in the present-day town of Waltham, flows into Graham Lake, the source of Union River.

⁶ Probably one of the family of Meletiah Jordan, one of the first settlers in what is now Ellsworth.

⁷ The census of 1790 lists a Samuel Debeck as living in what is now Ellsworth.

⁸ There is no Emerson listed as living in Sedgwick according to the census of 1790. It may possibly have been Joseph Ementon; more likely, Mr. Emerson came to Sedgwick after 1790.

⁹ Probably John Lee of Penobscot, the only Lee listed as living in Hancock County by the census of 1790.

¹ Probably either Thomas or Joseph Moon of Sullivan, both of whom are listed in the census of 1790. See L. A. C. Johnson, *Sullivan and Sorrento Since 1760*, 355, and also the map reproduced on the inside of the covers of that volume.

and a cut of cold lamb to fortify with till you get to better quarters. I am with much respect

and esteem dear sir

Your most obedient servant

DONALD ROSS

Honorable David Cobb, Esquire

James Richardson to Cobb, Mount Desert,

21 September 1799 [CP]²

Honoured Sir:

Mountdesert September 21st 1799

I take the liberty to inform you that there is a small piece of marsh at the head of our river, belonging to the land which I understand you have the care of, on which there used to be about four or five tuns of hay cut yearly. But it lying common, and no fence round it for 16 years past, it is mostly trod out with the cattle and no hay cut thereon and it will be costly fencing it. But, sur, if you will approve of it, I will fence it and keep the cattle off. If you will allow me the improvement thereof so long as to pay the cost of fencing, which will be considerable for it will take a mill of fence, besides two watter fences a crose cricks which must be made with floating booms by reason of a strong tide. Pray if you will allow of my proposals send me a line or two by the berer and you will oblige your humble servant

JAMES RICHARDSON, JUNIOR

Honorable General Cobb, Esquire
Goldsborough

Cobb to Bingham, Hallowell, 5 October 1799 [CP]

Dear Sir:

Hallowell on Kennebeck October 5th. 1799

My time has been so intirely occupied by attentions to such a variety of objects, as must plead my apology for not communicating with you since my return from Boston in July last.

The deeds were duly receiv'd as well as your two letters of the 3d and 13th of August; but we have happily had no occasion for the deeds, for these blustering trespassers finding the period of their ruin approach came, the week before court, and humbly requested a settlement, which from

² This document is included simply as an example of the type of letter which Cobb received regularly from settlers. James Richardson, Jr., was the son of one of the first settlers on Mount Desert. See G. E. Street, *Mount Desert*, 115, 144.

motives of conciliation and future peace we have consented to and have taken their obligations for costs and damages. We have done the same with the Machias people whom we had prosecuted the last summer. This is gaining a great point without half the trouble that has generally been expected.

I had determin'd previously to the receipt of your letter of the 13th. of August to visit this place at this time and had made arrangements with Mr. Richards accordingly. Since my arrival here I have convers'd with a number of characters about your lands, and they all agree that the tract is very valuable in point of soil, more especially the southern half of it. Some say that it is far superior to the lands in this neighbourhood which are certainly of the first quality; indeed there cannot be a doubt but that the greater part of this tract is equal to any in the District of Maine, and that in my opinion, is saying that it is superior to any in New England. As it appear'd to me of importance that some attention should be paid to this tract this fall, I have made the following arrangements, which the Honorable Judge Cony, whom you know, has engaged to execute, viz., he is to visit the lands this fall, to see as many of the inhabitants as he can that are now on the lands, to obtain the number of the whole as well those who are, as those who are not, entitled to land as settlers, and to make a report, together with his opinion of the general goodness of the soil, its susceptibility of agricultural improvements in point of soil as well as its contiguity to other settlements, and the best, cheapest, and most expeditious mode to be adopted for bringing forward the settlement of the county. When I receive his report it shall be forwarded to you. For this service I have promis'd him an honorable reward. It became more necessary that something should be done with your tract of land upon this river, as I found a clamor and jealousy against you for the neglect of the settlement of it, and our friend Cony among the other great folks was not the least noisy.

As far as I have seen of the Kennebeck it [is] a very delightfull country, with a soil that is now coming into a state of agricultural improvement that in a short time cannot fail of exceeding any part of the United States that I have ever yet seen. I am informed that the soil is much better on each side, at some little distance from the river, as you go northward, and which is now filling with inhabitation with a rapidity almost equal to what we have seen in the Genesee. These settlements have extended to the township on your southern line where lands are now selling from 1 to 1½ dollars per acre. The proprietors of some of them reside here, who inform me, that they have no doubt of filling those towns with in-

habitation within two years without any exertion further than keeping their lands at market. Some of these townships have now thirty families upon them.

I have visited your friend Mr. Ben Vaughan who resides here with his family. He is truly infected with the mania of Maine—he intends to make this his place of residence for life. His brother John from Philadelphia is coming here to reside as is his brother Sam from Europe.³ He is much [?] of a gentleman and has an amiable family who all appear to be delighted with this country.

I shall return to Gouldsboro' tomorrow from whence you shall soon hear from me again.

I am, etc.

[No signature]

John Merrick to Bingham, Hallowell, 13 October 1799 [CP]⁴

William Bingham, Esquire
Philadelphia
Sir:

Hallowell 13 October 1799

In the letter you have done me the honor to address to me concerning the tract of land you own on this river, you ask my opinion of the lands, the means of settling them, and the facility of procuring characters to conduct the settlement.

My personal observation has never extended to the interior of the tract, but I have been on the Piscataquis River within a few miles of it, also within a mile of it towards its S.E. angle, and within from 10 to 15 miles of every part of its S. line. My opinion therefore of the lands in question is founded almost wholly on conjecture, except as it is built on the accounts of others; and even so far, it is nearly as vague and baseless as my own analogical reasoning.

The statements that have been made to me by various persons I cannot confide in, and it would of course be trifling to state them. Speaking however in general terms of the country, 'tis well known that W. of your tract, around the Androscoggin and her lakes, the country is mountainous and dreary; towards the N.W., travellers to Canada say much low land exists; in the N.E. are immense lakes; around the S.E. angle and along

³ For Samuel Vaughan, see R. H. Gardiner, *Early Recollections*, 121.

⁴ There is a photostatic copy of this letter in William Bingham Letters, 1793-1803, 10-27, at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania. For John Merrick, see E. H. Nason, *Old Hallowell on the Kennebec*, 99-106, and D. R. Goodwin, *Notice of John Merrick*, 1 *Coll. Me. Hist. Soc.*, VII, 379-402.

the S. line, the lands are known to be excellent. Add to these facts, that where the country E. of Kennebec River is known, it is seen smooth and even, with handsome swells, seldom rising to the bold, and never to the abrupt. Between Kennebec and Androscoggin, the features of the country are much stronger. From these materials something like a general conclusion may be drawn: vizt., that your tract probably partakes of the nature of all these points which are known to exist around its outer lines; and that most of these qualities will be found in the neighbourhood of their assigned situations. The evidence of a surveyor, especially a State surveyor, of a hunter, or a traveller, will be found to be partial and defective, as it will necessarily be confined to the outskirts or the streams of the tract, and also to receive a colouring from the objects which lead them there, or the state of mind or comforts they enjoyed there. My own opinion is that the tract will on the whole be found worse than official reports have stated, but far better than the public estimate of it, that tho' it may prove partially bad from broken shape, defective soil, high elevation, cold neighbourhood, or the prevalence of morass, barrens, or water, yet that parts of it will be found of an excellent quality.

You have certainly one satisfaction, not universal in these parts: namely, that your lands have few squatters. If the number exceeds 100 (which I doubt), I must still call it inconsiderable; and the solidity of your title (if you compleat it with the State) will render it not only easy to arrange with them, but may turn the incident to your advantage, as many of their farms are in tolerable cultivation. Lumbering will be unknown in those remote quarters, which is a source of our most dangerous race of squatters. The best measure however against them is to put the lands into a regular train of settlement, in order to give the preponderance to men who have a title to the lands they cultivate.

Another advantage which you possess is, that your estate lies near to an immense tract of land which is to the S.E. well known, and in high request thro' New England. The effect of reputation in favor of a whole country is great with the distant adventurer, who cannot be informed of small objects, and who foresees the conveniences and benefits deriveable from a growing population and from lands being in good esteem.

The Kennebec River, winding thro' a course of near 100 miles within your lines, carries many benefits with it to your tract.

I might enumerate also among the advantages which your land possesses, those which arise to it from the state of cultivation, and from the trade of the lower parts of the river.

Allow me here to observe that the points of the Million Acres which can

be said to be known in the slightest degree are few and distant. What is the practical inference to be drawn but that it is the measure of a prudent man to examine before he acts? Little, very little is known of the tract. Permit me then earnestly to recommend that your ground be searched and scrutinized by men of cool judgement, and veracity, to enable you to determine how far, and where, your efforts should be directed, if you retain your Purchase. A man probably is not to be met with who can or who will give you a just account of the whole tract. I admire the District of Maine, and shall be gratified by every exertion that increases her prosperity, whether my own interest is promoted by it or not. But I am impelled to repeat my entreaty that an examination may be made of those parts of the tract in question where your operations are to begin, before you commit yourself for any expensive settlement.

The leading questions which your 2d. enquiry involves are whether the whole of the Million shall at once be brought into view, and settled, by an extensive and complicated operation? or shall the settlements be gradual commencing with a limited number of townships, and the progression [*sic*] of it be regulated by contingent events?

The first mode appears to me to be unnatural and almost impracticable; and also profitless, because enormously expensive.

I will state a few reasons on which I ground my preference of beginning with a few townships and extending the number according to circumstances. These I shall state as they rise spontaneously without waiting to arrange or connect them.

1st. 'Tis imitating the operations of nature, and therefore wise and profitable.

2d. The uncertainty of your information concerning its interior parts renders it prudent.

3d. There is a moral certainty that the whole tract is not of an uniform quality. By beginning with some of the best parts and those most commodiously situated, a general good name will be established for the whole.

4th. The lands in this country settle spontaneously by means of an internal population, and by an accession of adventurers. From these two sources perhaps about 700 new settlements may be annually made on the Kennebec country and its dependencies. Quere. What proportion of these will your tract get, under the obvious disadvantages of its northern situation and unknown value?

5th. Will it not be injurious to its credit and value to begin with an extent of land disproportionate to the population to be thrown upon it?

6th. The mode of settlement will thus be simplified.

7th. The profits will be greater, a better price will be given for the whole gradually, and you have a fairer chance of keeping the whole in your own hands, because:

8th. Little advance will be necessary, few associates, and but one agent if a plan of gradual settlement is adopted.

By beginning the operations at the S. line you may for the present take advantage of roads, mills, provision, stores and other conveniencies which already exist in the neighbouring towns.

I will also add that as returns will be slow, and distant, œconomy and foresight become more necessary.

Having stated a few reasons for confining the commencement of your intended settlement to a few townships, I should next be naturally led to detail the order of the first operations.

In so doing however there is some danger of my exceeding your wishes, and interfering with some favourite plan. If any apology is necessary I beg you to believe that proceeding to it arises merely from the hope that my knowledge of this country may enable me to add my mite towards maturing your own plans.

I recommend then

1st. An examination of the South Division of the tract in order to discover those parts of it in which the settlement can be begun to most advantage.

2^d. A survey for the purpose of cutting roads.

3^d. Cutting roads.

4th. Erecting mills.

5th. Settling with squatters.

6th. A gradual examination of the parts that lie more remote.

The previous examination which I have pressed may, if you prefer it, be confined in the first instance to a tract extending along the S. line, and up the river, as far as you are inclined to offer for the first stage of the settlement. This plan however ought not to be acted upon unless authorized by the reports of the first examination.

I will proceed upon the supposition that the lands contiguous to the S. line will be found favourable for settlement. For if they should hereafter appear to be unfavourable, yet you will be possessed of my idea of the best direction for the first road, and enabled to adapt it (if approved) to any new plan.

1st. Begining at Kennebec River, I propose that a road should be cut at one mile distance from the S. line of the tract, and parallel to it, to the East and to the West, and having reached the E. line of the tract, it should be bent to a S.E. course and carried by permission of Messrs. Odier

I will annex a plan of the manner in which I would
propose to run out the Lots -



John Merrick's Plan for the Development of the Kennebec Million

and Co.⁵ through No. 5 of 5th range (perhaps Messrs. Odier and Co. will assist). At about 5 miles it will strike a new road known by the name of Elkins' road which road will soon be open to Penobscot River. Again proceed from the Kennebec River westerly on the same course and distance from your South line, and when you approach your W. boundary let the road be cut southerly to join the Farmington and Sandy River road. Hereafter other roads may be cut parallel to this one and to the northward of its proposed course, if further acquaintance with the tract will justify it, but the first road I would recommend to be forced thro' without regarding small obstacles. One important one however may be avoided if you wish it (I mean the expense of throwing a bridge over Sebasticook main stream, say \$300). This may be avoided by using a bridge about 5 miles off, that will probably be soon built in No. 3 south of your tract.

I beleive I have hinted before that the interest of your tract will eventually be bound up with the interests of Kennebec River. "Why then cut towards Penobscot?" Because it will be the most popular direction you can give it. The lumberers on Penobscot River receive a part of their subsistence from the vicinity of this river. They give high prices for produce and of course a fever rages thro' all our new towns to go to that market. Your lands will sell better by enabling your settlers to go there.

I would also propose to join the West end of your road to Sandy River, because the lands on that river are in great repute, and of course land hunters when they are at Sandy River will be tempted to visit your lands, if there is a road open, and the more so if that road is a thoroughfare.

2d. From this road I would recommend sundry cross roads branching off towards the S. and joining the various roads that already exist in the range of townships to the southward of your tract.

3d. From this road, I should also say, let a road be cut towards the north beginning Number 1 at 1 mile from your East line, Number 2 at 2 miles from Number 1, Number 3 at 2 miles from Number 2 and so on to the river, cutting or marking a road to the northward at intervals of 2 miles, and 1 also on each bank of the river. The reason I will assign presently.

As to the roads themselves they need only be cut wide enough to allow a sledge to pass in winter and wheels in summer. The settlers will soon lay open the mud holes to the sun and air for their own comfort.

⁵ I believe this may be a misprint for Ogier. The Ogier family were merchants of Quebec, one of their number, Abraham, later settling in Camden. See *Bangor Historical Magazine*, VII. 111-112.

Let the lots be butted on the several roads. The size of the lots perhaps may be advantageously made 200 acres each. One hundred is the common quantity, but most settlers wish for 200. The second hundred may be sold conditionally, and made to depend on the payment for the first hundred. But the possibility of getting 200 acres will add to the popularity of the tract.

While your surveyor is running out roads, and marking lots upon them, he may also run out certain larger and arbitrary divisions to form townships. Six miles square is the common quantity.

I will annex a plan of the manner in which I would propose to run out the lots.

This plan is intended roughly to assist my description and proposals. It represents 6 miles square. I have said "Carry the East and West Roads at one mile from the South line" because that distance will allow room for the lots to be 1 mile deep, then 100 rods from it will leave every lot 200 acres—and keep the advantage of it to yourself. Lots SS are proposed for immediate sale, PP to be reserved for a better price. I need not fill up the whole square.

● means where settlers may divide for themselves, without your going to so much additional expense.

I have already stated the common and natural increase of the Kennebec country. Land holders generally sit at home waiting the issue of a public advertisement, or private correspondence. I would propose that your agent should travel through New England states, generally at a judicious distance from the sea coast—I mean at that distance at which he would be most likely to meet with both industrious settlers, and settlers with cash at command. On these journeys he might form connections, make himself and lands known by drafts, conversation, hand bill advertisements and other mode of publicity. To such an experiment as this, I should look for the expeditious peopling that extensive district.

Another means of settlement I propose is making contracts with certain influential characters that may be found who would readily engage to find any given number of settlers, on condition of more extensive sales to themselves, say of 1 or 2,000 acres.

Better terms may be made with such persons, by giving them assurance of incorporating a town by their names on certain conditions of settlement.

An agent will have ample time for such objects, if cutting roads etc. are executed by contract. Of this hereafter.

Having set thus fire to these various trains, it will be necessary to at-

tend to the erection of mills—saw mills and grist mills are closely connected with the necessary's of life. Various expedients may be substituted for these important objects to save time to the settlement, and to guard against expense without sacrificing the settler's comforts. I mean a wheel over the side of a boat, sending up a few steel mills on the principle of our coffee mills, saw pitts and saws etc. etc. Such things will always be useful.

Settlements with squatters will be easy if done on liberal terms. Some of yours I suspect are quieted because on before A.D. 1784.

Having regularly commenced your settlement, information will easily and gradually be obtained of the interior for future operations.

I omitted to observe that if you think it best to settle a colony high up in the tract it must be sufficiently large to be able to keep the roads open thro' the winter.

Allow me now to review what I have written in order to bring the expense into one point of view.

1st. Roads can be cut in some situations for \$8 per mile. In other situations the expense will encrease manyfold. Say thro' an extent of 40 miles the amount will average \$15 per mile exclusive of large bridge and long causeways. On the larger streams, a ferry boat may be kept by a setler. Or a flying bridge may be made for travellers to use.

If you adopt the plan I have proposed the roads required to be cut will be as follows:

East and West	40
S.E. to join Elkins'	5
S. to Farmington	5
Sundry roads to town, roads already existing, uncertain, say	40
Sundry North roads on which lots are to be butted	100
Contingencies	10
	<hr/>
	200
200 miles @ 15	\$3,000
Sundry causeways and bridges	3,000
	<hr/>
	\$6,000

Six thousand dollars will give the settlement a very handsome start as relates to this object. To meet this expense, I hesitate not to say that the lands will readily be taken in payment for labor on these objects @ 50/100 per acre. Perhaps a better price would be given, but I have little hesitation to state it at that price.

2d. Mills. Persons also will be found without difficulty who would contract to erect mills at their own cost and risk, and as their own prop-

erty; provided the proprietor of the land would assist, by a present of iron works, mill stones, or by an equivalent in cash. By a gift of 250 dollars, and in some cases by a gift of 3 or 400 acres of land, mills (1 saw and 1 grist in the same frame) might be procured to be erected to the great œconomy of the concern.

The number of these mills in the first instance is unknown, perhaps neighbouring mills are sufficiently convenient. A mill (saw and grist) should exist within every 6 miles square, say 4 only for the tract in question, the expense of which will be \$1,000 cash advanced, if no part can be paid in land.

3d. The examination I have suggested I will call	\$ 200
The survey of the same, say 6 townships	800
	<hr/> \$1,000

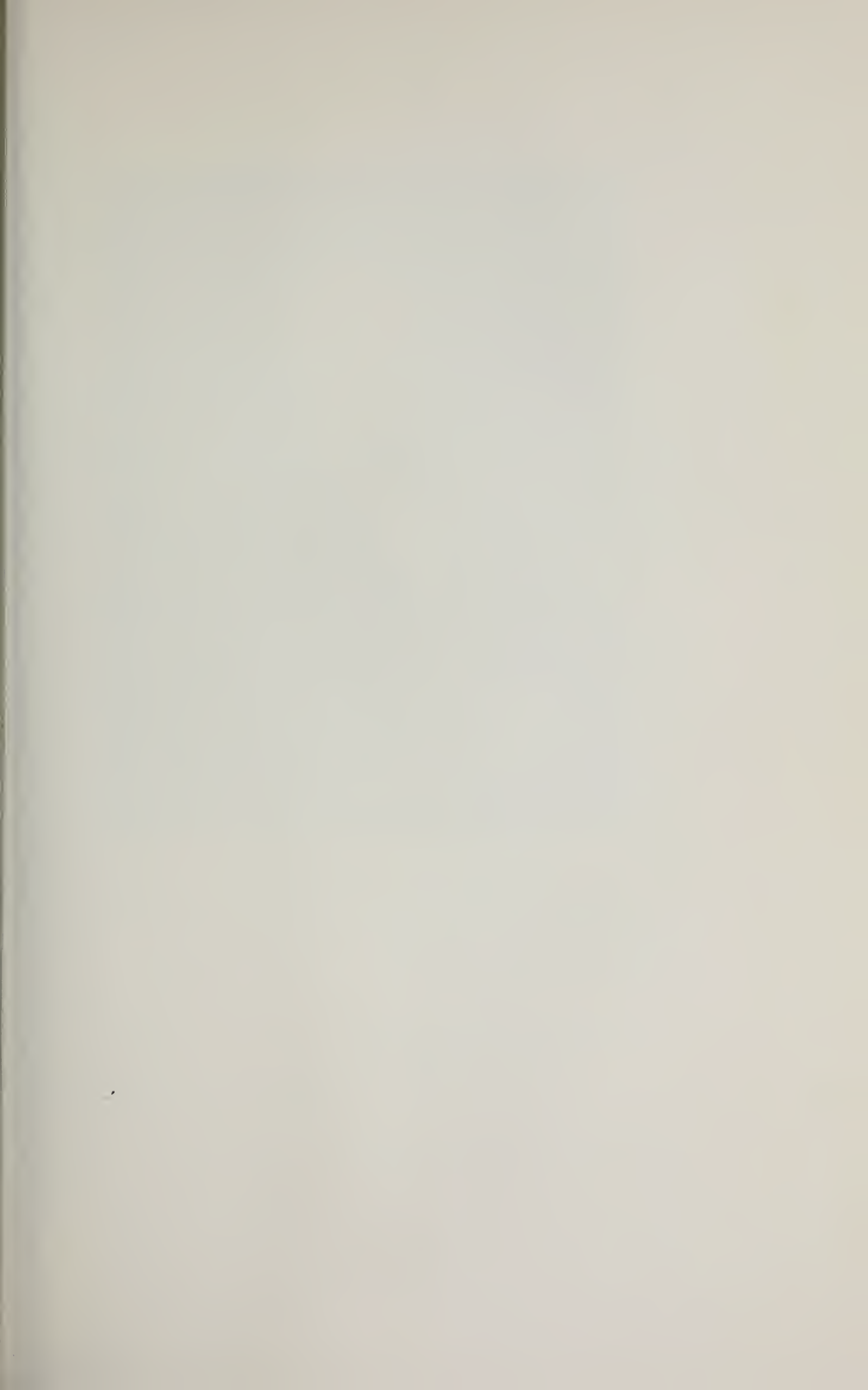
Here then for 2,000 dollars advanced, and 12,000 acres of land, the leading necessities of the settlement are provided, and an additional value of 20/100 per acre is immediately attached to an extent of 40 miles by 6, diminished by 12,000 acres, and the expense of agency.

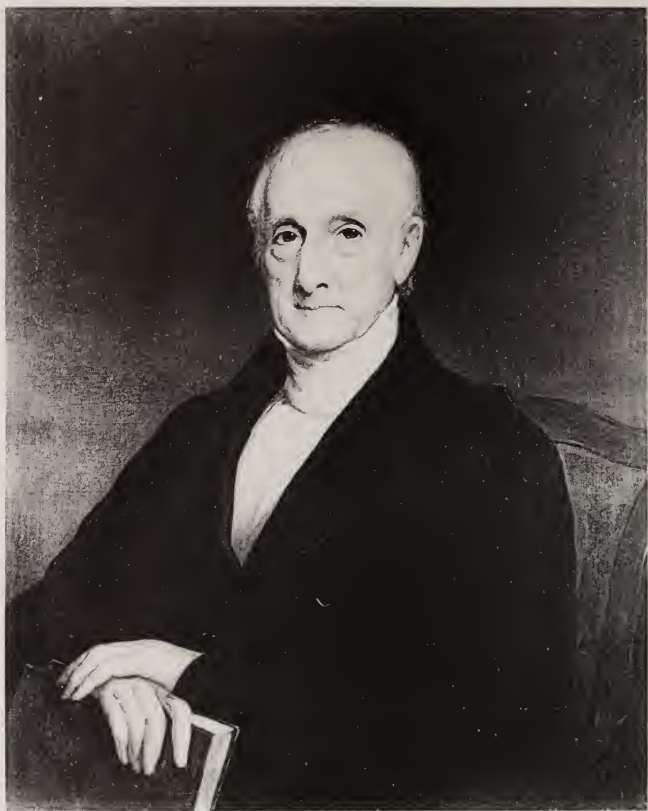
I beg leave to add that I do not write from mere theoretic knowledge of the business. I have been concerned in the practice of settling land. I have contracted within a few months for erecting 2 grist mills, 2 saw mills, and the cutting of about 30 miles of road. The lands have paid every expense except \$150 advanced in cash. The heaviest part of your expenses will come out of immediate sales or contracts, tho' it is probable that the situation of your lands will render a greater sacrifice necessary. Tho' the objects can be effected without money, in some cases they can be more profitably done with ready money.

You will do me the justice to remark that I am not advising a niggardly mode of settlement that shall destroy its own listless efforts, but that I am pointing out the practicability of an effective settlement, without a distressing advance of capital.

Till the plan you will pursue is stated I cannot speak of the "facility of procuring characters to direct it." Different plans require variety of talent to carry them into execution. From what I have written, and from my known character, you will judge of the degree of confidence you can place in me. In return, when I have your plan before me, I shall be able to decide with more certainty of my own capacity for the employment.

When I thus offer myself for an agency which will involve an high degree of confidence, it becomes me to remove from your mind, every suspicion of the existence of a rival interest. Personally I have none, and as for the business I am conducting for Mr. Charles Vaughan and the





John Merrick of Hallowell

Would-be Agent for William Bingham on the Kennebec
Portrait by Henry Inman

Hallowell family, the only object I have engaged to effect, will probably be effected in three months—in one I could do it if necessary. I therefore may fairly state myself to be at liberty to treat with you.

If there are any services I can perform for you on this river, you may command, sir

Your obedient servant
JOHN MERRICK

Ross to Cobb, Union River, 29 October 1799 [CP]

Dear Sir:

Union River 29th October 1799

I had the pleasure of receiving yours of the 21st instant from Bluehill and will comply with the instructions therein mentioned. Mr. Coolige⁶ has just made his appearance, and am very glad of it for in this starved part of the world the best of turks I concluded woud soon produce a famine. I have sent by Mr. Coolige three dozen turkies, two dozen fowls, and 2 pair of ducks with a half bushel of corn for their subsistence. I heartily wish they may arrive safe and meet your approbation.

I hope you and Mr. Richards will find it convenient to spend a few days with us at Union River previous to the opening of our approaching frozen campaign. I dread the very thought of six months shinburning locked out from the world and society. If you have any compassion you will contrive to let me have the perusal of a few books to which Mr. Richards I hope will contribute. I will take particular care of them and see that they are safely returned. If you have any further communication to make respecting the logging business you will please do it by the mail or any good opportunity that occurs. Mr. Richards proposed your sending me a joint letter which woud comprehend my instructions and the authority derived from you, which I might on occasion have ready to produce to some of our bashaws. I wish you every comfort and happiness your heart can desire. My best respects attend Mr. Richards and your son, with the rest of your good family, to whom I have not the honor of being known.

With great respect I am dear sir
Your most obedient servant
DONALD ROSS

Honorable David Cobb, Esquire

⁶ There is a Silas Coolidge listed in the census of 1790 as living in Trenton or Union River.

Cobb to Bingham, Gouldsborough, 11 November 1799 [CP]

Gouldsboro' November 11th. 1799

To William Bingham, Esquire

Dear Sir:

My last letter was of the 5th. ultimo from Hallowell on the Kennebeck, in which I inform'd you of the directions I had given Doctor Cony respecting your lands on that river. Whilst I was there I was applied to by a physician from a town on the Androscoggin River to know at what price 3 or 4000 acres of land, in one of the southwestern townships of the Million Acres, could be obtain'd for, as he and 20 more families intended to settle there if the terms could be made agreeable. I told him that the price to settlers would be 1 dollar per acre, but where such numbers went first on the lands there might probable be some allowance, but that the lands could not be dispos'd of 'till the townships were run out which it was your determination to do as soon as possible. They had seen the land and were much pleas'd with it. On my return, I rode in company with a person who resides not far from the southeastern part of the Million Acres. He inform'd me that in the course of the last summer a number of families, say 10 or 12, past his house on their way to reside on this tract, as they preferr'd it to the lands below, and that they were particular in their inquiries to know where they could obtain a title to the lands. I mention these two accidental circumstances of information from opposite parts of the tract, seperate from any other evidence, to convince you and others that as a body of land it is probably of the first quality and that it is now placed in a situation which of all others you would prefer, being in the midst of the tide of immigration from the West, and which if properly improved, by given titles to the settlers as they come, will ultimately give you a much greater profit than you ever contemplated from the Purchase; but if neglected, will deluge that country with inhabitants, to eject whom, after a short possession will cost you more trouble, more danger, and more money than the property is worth.

From this view of the subject and from your known anxiety respecting these lands, I will take the freedom to communicate such a system of measures as I think are necessary now to be pursued, and which by comparing and uniting with those that Doctor Cony may hereafter report, will enable you to form such a mode of management as will be the most satisfactory to you. As I conceive it is your duty, as you stand relatively to the Commonwealth, so it is your highest interest that something should be immediately done with those lands; and I cannot conceive that any

measures you may persue can in the least interfere with any future sales you may make of this property either to an individual or companies. As to the expence, it is not worth mentioning, the most of which, if not all will grow out of the operations, after the first year; and as to the objection you have heretofore made that by the sale to settlers it would scatter your property into every body's hands, you have only to reflect which of the two evils would be the least (in addition to what I before observ'd), to have your property thus scatter'd, or to have it taken from you by a virulent system of taxation instigated by jealousy and revenge for not attempting, agreeably to the spirit of your contract the settlement of that country. The measures I would propose are the following, viz.:

First. The first range of six miles wide on the southern line of the tract, being 23 miles on the west and 16 miles on the east of the river should be run out into townships of 6 miles square, beginning at the river and most of them, if not all, into lots of one hundred acres each or $\frac{1}{2}$ mile squares each; and so to run out any townships in the 2d range that are in a state of settlement. I have inquired at what surveying could be done for on the Kennebeck, and am inform'd that they run townships into one hundred acre lots for 200 dollars, provided the outlines of the township have been already run, and will return two good maps, with the course of the streams and the quality of lots mark'd on them. As the outlines of these townships have not been run, it may perhaps cost 40 dollars more, and

Secondly. An agent should be appointed who resides on or near the tract (the more respectable the character the better), with a small stipend of from 2 to 500 dollars per annum, who should generally superintend as to surveys to be made, procuring the surveyors, and pointing out to settlers the lots they may occupy, always having by him one of the plans returned by the surveyor and the terms on which they may be purchas'd, etc.

Thirdly. Another agent should be appointed in whom you can with confidence place the power of giving deeds of these lands to the settlers after they have been contracted for by the sub agent. [This sentence crossed out.]

To make the system compleat it will be necessary that some person, in whom you can place a confidence, should be empower'd to give deeds to the settlers when they pay for their lands, and this business, if agreeable to you, I will undertake to do, and indeed to put into operation any system that you shall finally determine upon.

It is the opinion of Mr. B. Vaughan, Doctor Cony and others, with whom I frequently convers'd, that if your lands were run out into lots

for settlers, you would have from 50 to 100 families upon them annually. Some allowance however is to be made on Mr. Vaughan's opinions, as he is as sanguine and as enthusiastical respecting this country as myself.

You may perhaps recollect what I have frequently mentioned in conversation and occasionally in my letters that the Kennebeck Million would be fill'd with inhabitation before this tract would have any important impression made upon it by natural emigration, and that an interior situation of country under like circumstances, would, in a given time, rise faster in value than a sea shore country of the same extent. The time I believe is now come when some of these observations, if not all, will be verified.

The action which I had commenced three years since against the ancient proprietors of Trenton was determined at the last Supreme Court in this District, by which the Commonwealth are repossessed of the township, thence the grant to De Gregoire, under which you hold, is substantiated. The execution for the possession of the township and for costs was forwarded to me sometime since by the Attorney General. It has been put into the hands of the proper officers for a regular completion of the business.

At the close of the year our accounts will be forewarded at which time I will give you a detail of our proceedings for the season.

I was in hope that my friend Richards would have gone to Philadelphia this winter with whom you would have had a conversation respecting our proceedings here, but I suspect his prospect of hymenial pleasures with the amiable Miss Jones of Machias⁷ during the cold season of our climate, has many more charms than a cheerless, dreary journey to Philadelphia.

I am dear sir with esteem and respect

Your obedient servant

D. C.

Ross to Cobb, Union River, 19 November 1799[CP]

Dear Sir: Union River 19th November 1799

I have been for some time expecting the honor of your commands, and indeed the season has proved so mild that I have had the presumption to anticipate the pleasure of a visit from you and Mr. Richards. I have now almost despaired of that honor for this season.

Agreeably to your directions from Bluehill I have affixed advertizements in the most publick places respecting the logging. I have no reason

⁷ Sarah Coffin Jones, the daughter of Stephen Jones of Machias.

to think that the people this way will attempt to log or cut any timber without permission first obtained. I have given permission to Mr. Dutton⁸ to cut thirty tons of oak timber and three thousand of staves. I have for his obligation for the proprietors part at the rate of 50 cents per ton and for the staves at one dollar forty cents per thousand. Shoud I not have done right, please advise me.

On the lower part of Trenton there has been a very open and bare-faced trespass, committed this last week on your lands by John Gilpatrick and a certain Berry.⁹ They hauled 100 logs, and I think ought to be made an example of, either by law or making them settle at a higher [rate] than the others, as they now can have no colour of excuse.

I have not learnd in what order you received the poultry, their number or whether you received the letter I sent with them by Mr. Coolige. I have to return you my best thanks for the box sent by Fabriques boat. I have had in contemplation to write Gilpatrick and Berry, but think best to wait your further orders.

I have the honor to be

With much respect

Sir, your most obedient servant and friend

DONALD ROSS

Honorable David Cobb, Esquire

*Cobb and Richards to Ross, Gouldsborough,
20 November 1799 [CP]*

Dear Sir:

Gouldsboro' November 20th. 1799

We intended to have forwarded to you our advertisement regulating the logging business up the river for this winter, but upon reflection it is not only unnecessary, but would have a tendency to lessen your importance as our agent. You will therefore sett up your advertisements as our agent, demanding one tenth of the boards made from the logs at the mill, and that they do not go above the falls on the Western Branch to obtain them. All persons are to have your permission for cutting logs, and those who do not obtain it, shall be prosecuted. You will take care in all such cases to obtain proper evidence of the trespass.

As it is our intention that an honest tenth shall be accounted for, we

⁸ Jesse Dutton is listed in the census of 1790 as living on Union River.

⁹ There were three Killpatricks, Robert, Marten, and Samuel, and an Edward Berry listed by the census of 1790 as living in Trenton. Presumably John was a member of the same Killpatrick family.

have made an arrangement that all the logs cut shall be inspected and numbered, which inspection will be returned to you that you might know of whom to demand and how much you are to receive, and we expect that our proportion of the boards in the spring will be among the first that is deliver'd at the mills, as well as the amount of what you already hold against those with whom you settled the year past.

We have been informed that it is the intention of some of your people to cut oak and other hard wood timber from off our lands up the river. This must absolutely be prohibited. If timber is wanted from the forest, let them purchase the land on which it grows, and not live eternally on plunder.

What has been done with Smith against whom the execution rests at Castine?

You will be pleas'd occasionally to have an eye on old Job Anderson¹ and others in Trenton who are too fond of cutting wood from lands not their own. No permission is to be given in future to any body for this purpose. That Smith, who is on a lot in that town, occupies it for no other purpose than plunder, and a brother of his is on another for the same purpose.² These people we must deal with in some way or other. The sooner they are out of the country the better.

Fabrique will occupy at the western falls this winter. He has our permission to log there. He will be there making preparation for the dam and mill to be erected the insuing year, and he will inspect the logs that are cutt by others and make return to you. You may converse with him on the subject.

The cargo of poltry was receiv'd; we are much obliged by your attention to this business.

We are with esteem

Your friends and obedient servants

C. and R.

*Cobb and Richards to Ross, Gouldsborough,
26 November 1799 [CP]*

Mr. Donald Ross

Gouldsboro' November 26th. 1799

Dear Sir:

By the last mail we receiv'd your letter of the 19th. instant. It was our

¹ Job Anderson is listed in the census of 1790 as living in Trenton.

² Possibly Nathaniel and James Smith, the only two Smiths listed in the census as living in Trenton. One of these may well have been the Smith against whom the execution rested.

wish to have preserv'd the hard wood timber on your river; and as it was not the custom of the inhabitants to cut such timber it was never given you in charge to prevent it. You are therefore not to blame for permitting it. Whatever engagements you have made with Mr. Dutton must be complied with, but we request you in future to give no such permission. Indeed it is not our wish to sell any kind of timber whatever, and it is only to oblige those who are accustom'd to live by gitting lumber that any permission is given to them.

You will be pleas'd to call upon Gilpatrick and Berry for their trespass in Trenton, and if they do not settle with you to your satisfaction, have them prosecuted at the next term. Mr. Wetmore or Mr. Nelson³ will send you the writs on application.

You are only obliged to Mr. T. Cobb⁴ for the box that came in Fabrique's boat. Our forgetfulness prevented your receiving an additional one.

Our visit to Union River must be postpon'd, we fear for the season.

We are, with esteem

Your obedient servants

C. and R.

*George Virutho to Cobb and Richards, Union River,
26 November 1799 [CP]*⁵

Union River November 26th. 1799

Gentlemen:

Having a great notion to purchase a tract of unsettled land for farming buseniss only, and being informed that there is very good soil up this river, I there fore beg leave to request of you the reasonablest and lowest terms for about 5,000 acres, and when your [c]onditions will suet me I shall bring next spring from Germany a parsell of good labourers, tools, ustensels etc. to settle it immediately. Please direct an-

³ Nelson was Job Nelson of Castine, one of the leading lawyers of Hancock County. Mr. Wetmore was William Wetmore of Castine, later Judge of Probate for Hancock County. See W. Willis, *History of the Law, the Courts and the Lawyers of Maine*, 188-192, 125.

⁴ General Cobb's eldest son.

⁵ This document is included as an example of the type of nibble Cobb received occasionally from possible purchasers of land. There is nothing in CP to indicate that anything ever came of the proposal to settle Germans on Union River. I have not been able to identify the author of this letter.

swer to Care of Mr. Thomas Brewers⁶ Boston and I remain with respect
Gentlemen,

Your most obedient servant

GEORGE VIRUTHO

To Messrs. Cobb and Richards
Goldsborough

Bingham to Cobb, Philadelphia, 10 December 1799 [CP]

Philadelphia December 10th 1799

Dear General:

I have received your favor of the 11th November from Gouldsbrough, which conveys a more detailed account of your excursion to Kennebec than was mentioned in your last letter.

I am fully impressed with the importance of lands in the neighbourhood of the Kennebec, and I have a proper idea of the advantages which will result from a proper attention to the improvement of this district. I have had a correspondence with Mr. Merrick (a brother in law of Mr. Vaughan) on this subject, who has been much employed in settling lands in this neighbourhood, and it is probable that I shall speedily adopt some mode of commencing an operation of this nature by having some of the townships (most advantageously situated) surveyed into small lots of a convenient size for farms.

But the object I have principally in view is to dispose of the whole of this tract to a company who, by dividing the concern, will make it more convenient to them to incur the expence of improvement, and to wait for such a length of time, for the slow returns, produced by the usual mode of selling this kind of property. There are no American fortunes equal to such an undertaking without embracing a great number of individuals and unfortunately those who have money are but little disposed to invest it in such objects.

I have therefore been making every effort to find some European purchasers, but hitherto without effect, altho I am willing to take a price far below what its value was ever estimated at. On the 1st July last, the balance due me for cash advances, including interest, beyond what has been received from Mr. Baring, amounts to \$181,032.28,⁷ independent of which, there is a large sum due from General Knox, for his obligations

⁶ There is a Thomas Brewer listed as shopkeeper in the Boston Directory for 1796.

⁷ For a breakdown of Bingham's expenditures on the Maine Lands, see the Appendices.

for monies lent him, amounting to nearly \$50,000. Under these circumstances, it will naturally occur to you, that I must from this property find the means of reimbursement.

Your ideas on the best mode of commencing operations for the settlement of these lands, are very clear and correct and I am much obliged to you for the same. In case of determining upon a plan of this kind, they will be very usefull to me, as your experience will be the best guide. I shall wait with impatience for Dr. Coney's report, after his examination of the subject, and I wish you to give me your opinion of the characters, which I could most easily engage and who would be calculated for the purpose of superintending these lands, and having them surveyed, as well as placing settlers on them.

From Mr. Merrick's manner of writing and his acquaintance with pursuits of this nature, I am disposed to believe he would be a suitable person for such an undertaking; however it is difficult to judge whether he possesses the requisite qualities, without the advantage of a personal acquaintance with him.

You probably have seen him in Mr. Vaughan's family, and can give me some ideas with regard to him, as calculated to direct my opinions on this point, which I wish you to convey to me, as soon as convenient.

I am sorry to find that our settlements do not make greater progress in your neighbourhood.

Altho the situation is more distant from the sources of population than the lands more westwardly, yet I supposed that the facility of conveying their person and effects by water, would tend greatly to give a decided preference to your position.

Your opinion of the Kennebec tract, with respect to its fortunate situation for attracting settlers is a very agreeable circumstance and would have rendered your letter a document of great consequence, if you had not interspersed so many discouraging remarks, relative to oppressive taxation, the deluging the lands with inhabitants, whom it will cost more to eject than the lands are worth, which made it inexpedient to exhibit your letter, where I wished to make an impression, and unfortunately I am so divested of documents to counteract the tendency of the malicious report (founded on views of self interest) made by Cazenove's agent, that I am deprived of a fair chance of obtaining a proper consideration for this property, or of procuring any monied men, to ease me of so heavy a weight, by taking an interest in the tract, and joining in the expences of settlement.

I am happy to find that you have gained the action commenced against the ancient proprietors of Trenton, and that you will, of course, obtain

possession thereof. Van Berckel's pretensions will soon be at rest and the lands he claims may be turned to account. I think it would be advisable to commence operations as soon as possible, on Union River, as the lands in that quarter are exceedingly valuable, as well from local position as fertility of soil.

I wish you to return me, by some safe conveyance, the deeds that were forwarded to you, for the establishment of my claim to the different townships where deprivations on the timber had been made.

I wrote to our friend Richards lately, and congratulated him on his expected marriage. It was truly a surprize. I recollect the young lady, and admired her exceedingly, on our visit at Machias, but little thought at that time, she was destined to be so nearly connected with one of our party. She is very fortunate in the choice she has made, as very few persons possess so many amicable and valuable points of character as Richards.

I mentioned in my letter to him, an idea that I have long entertained, of the advantage that might result from establishing a board and lumber yard, on a large scale, at Gouldsbrough, where might be collected all species of boards, scantling, plank, ship timber, masts, spars etc., which the country afforded, and where vessels might be sure of obtaining such assortments as would suit the markets they were destined for. Every article of this nature has risen very much in value in Europe and will continue extravagantly high, from the vast consumption that the war has occasioned. A commerce of this kind, if it could be carried on, with any prospect of profit, would be attended with another advantage, that of pushing forward the rising fortunes of Gouldsbrough, by introducing a number of persons of different pursuits, who would be desirous of seeking employment in the busy scenes that such an establishment would occasion. I wish you to communicate your opinion on the subject, and to inform me whether any objections offer to the plan in question, and if it is practicable, whether it would take much time to make the previous arrangements to carry it into execution, and whether this is the most convenient moment for the purpose.⁸

I am with sincere regard

Dear General

Your obedient humble servant

WM. BINGHAM

General Cobb

⁸ This suggestion is another sign of Bingham's almost desperate determination to find some source of income from the Maine Lands, for General Cobb's basic policy had been to discourage lumbering and try to develop agriculture.

Ross to Cobb, Union River, 11 December 1799 [CP]

Dear Sir:

Union River 11th. December 1799

I had the honor of receiving both of your letters by the mail. I would with much pleasure avail myself of your invitation to meet in Congress on the affairs of Europe and give the King of Pruss a final blow, but the reason that you have for not visiting Union River is much more potent with me.

I have called on Gilpatrick and Berry and took their obligation for \$17.50 payable in six weeks. John Harding Junior⁹ has been also trespassing (tho' he says by permission from Blunt).¹ Be that as it may, I called on him and he has paid me \$11 for 33 cords of wood and 50 spruce logs. Kilpatrick and Berry's logs were also spruce.

Anderson at Oak Point and some others round there I will endeavour to find out. How soon I do they will be acquainted with it. Compliments to your son and Mr. Richards.

I have only to add that

Am with much respect and esteem dear sir

Your most obedient servant

DONALD ROSS

Honorable David Cobb, Esquire

Cobb's Store Account for 1799 [CP]²

General David Cobb

1799			
Jan.	1st	To 3 pecks Salt	@ \$5.50 per hogshead .56
	3d	" 1 box yellow Soap weight 54 lbs.	@ 9d. 6.74
		" box for " "	1/6 .25
	4th	" 6 yards Gurrah	@ 22 cts. 1.32

⁹ There is a John Harding listed in the census of 1790 as living in Trenton. Presumably this was his son.

¹ I believe this to have been the man whom De la Roche had left in charge of his property, though I have been unable positively to identify him as such.

² This personal store account of Cobb's is included here to shed light on life in Gouldsbrough at the turn of the century, to show the prices prevalent there, and to indicate the type of store which Cobb and Richards had established.

Most of the people mentioned in this account are listed as residing in Gouldsbrough by the census of 1790.

The additions at the bottom of each page of this account have been omitted. For those who care, I must confess that I have not checked the addition of the total, but I am confident that it is wrong. There are several obvious miscalculations in the account which I have left as they stand.

	5th	"	1 gallon Molasses	58 cts.	.58
	7th	"	Sundries delivered Peter Godfrey in full of his account and note		7.66
	8th	"	Sundries delivered John Coolidge	5/3	.87
		"	20 lb. Coffee	@ 25 cts.	5.—
		"	1 quart Pott (Pewter)	50 cts.	.50
	9th	"	3 1/4 lbs. Butter	@ 20 cts.	.65
		"	1 oz. Hambro Thread No. 8	8 cts.	.8
	10th	"	1 1/2 bushels Rye	4/9	.78
		"	1 pair Wool Cards	50 cts.	.50
		"	4 gallons Molasses	@ 58 cts.	2.32
	12th	"	3/4 lb. Soal Leather	@ 20 cts.	.15
	15th	"	1 pair Florentine Shoes	66 cts.	.66
		"	6 yards Shoe Binding	@ 1 ct.	.6
	16th	"	16 lb. Rice	@ \$2.75 per bushel	.37
		"	1 1/2 yards blue Broad Cloth	@ \$1.58	2.37
	17th	"	1 lb. Bohea Tea delivered Thomas Gubtail	\$1.16	1.16
		"	1 yard coarse Linnen	1/5d.	.24
	18th	"	1 gallon New England Rum delivered Thomas Gubtail	@ 1.16	1.16
		"	4 gallons West Indian Rum	@ \$1.12 1/2	4.50
	19th	"	4 lb. Bread	@ 11 cts.	.44
		"	1/4 lb. Bohea Tea	@ \$1.25	.31
				75	} delivered Mrs. Baker .75
	21st	"	Sundries delivered Colonel Hall for Slay Bells in part		.50
		"	Upper Leather for 1 pair Shoes for boy		.25
	22d	"	2 sceins colored Sewing Silk	@ 5 cts.	.10
	23d	"	16 1/2 lb. mould Candles	@ 18 cts.	2.96
		"	1 oz. Thread No. 26	22 cts.	.22
	24th	"	6 lb. 14 oz. Butter	@ 20 cts.	.97
	29th	"	Sundries	14 cts.	.14
Feb.	4th	"	3 pecks Salt	@ \$5.50 per hogshead	.56
	12th	"	5 pint Bowls	@ 4 cts.	.20
		"	1 1/2 yards coarse Linnen	@ 2/4	} delivered Sally Newman
		"	2 sceins Thread	@ 1d.	.61
		"	1 quart Ginn	@ \$1 per gallon	.25
	14th	"	14 3/4 lb. loaf Sugar	@ 1/9 1/2	4.41
	18th	"	Sundries delivered Nathaniel Moore for work		3.84
	20th	"	1 3/4 yards purple Callico	@ 1/11	.37
		"	1 peck Salt	@ 74 cts.	.19
		"	1 pair Florentine Shoes	66	.66
	21st	"	1/2 bushel Beans	@ 7/3	.60
		"	4 yards purple Callico	@ 1/11	1.28
Mar.	6th	"	2 lb. Chocolate	@ 25 cts.	.50
	7th	"	Cash paid for Snow-shoes and Broom		1.16
	9th	"	6 Needles	@ 1/6 hundred	. 1 1/2
		"	2 Darning Needles	@ 1/8 hundred	. 1
		"	1 1/4 yards blue Broad Cloth delivered John Coolidge	@ \$2.25 per yard	2.81
	9th	"	1/4 lb. Powder	@ 4/3	.17 1/2

" Cash paid Thomas Hill his account of

		Postage		5. 7½
11th	"	½ bushel Corn	@ 4/.	.33
13th	"	Sundries delivered John Coolidge	54 cts.	.54
15th	"	¼ lb. Powder	@ 4/3	.17½
18th	"	2 yards blue Coating	@ 3/—	1.—
	"	1 Tea Kettle	5/.	.83½
19th	"	2 sceins colored Thread	3/4 cts.	. 1½
	"	1 corn Broom	1/.	.16½
25th	"	1 scein colored Silk	5 cts.	. 5
26th	"	Fish	10 cts.	.10
	"	Sundries delivered Job Smith		1.94
27th	"	3 gallons Molasses	@ 3/6	1.75
28th	"	½ dozen Needles	@ 1/6 hundred	. 1½
	"	6 lb. Coffee	@ 30 cts.	1.80
	"	½ hundredweight sugar delivered De-		
		cember last	@ \$15	7.50
30th	"	30 bushels Corn	@ 4/5	22. 8
Apr. 5th	"	5 gallons Molasses	@ 3/6	2.91
	"	¼ lb. Snuff	@ 3/9	.15½
8th	"	Sundries delivered Phineas Tracy	42 cts.	.42
13th	"	Cash 70 cents. Sundries 62 cts. for		
		freight of Potatoes in part		1.32
	"	2 gallons Brandy	@ 9/3	3. 8
	"	4 lb. bar Soap	@ 9d.	.50
16th	"	4 lb. Candles delivered Captain Eustis		
		October last	@ 22 cts.	.88
19th	"	To Sundries delivered Peter Godfrey		1.—
23rd	"	Sundries	14 cts.	.14
24th	"	1 peck Salt	@ 74	.19
	"	1 corn Broom (partly worn)	12 cts.	.12
	"	1 quart Mugg	9d.	.12½
May 1st	"	3 lb. 14 oz. Soap	@ 9d.	.48½
8th	"	3 bushels Corn	@ 4/5	2.21
	"	1 " Rye	5/3	.87½
	"	1 pair women's Shoes delivered S.		
		Newman		1.—
11th	"	1 lb. Bohea Tea	70 cts.	.70
14th	"	1 sett Cups and Saucers	10d.	.14
	"	1 pair Shoes for Ebenezer	4/6	.75
	"	½ doz. Knives and Forks	5/.	.83
	"	46 lbs. fresh Fish	@ 3 cts.	1.38
15th	"	15 bushels Corn	@ 4/5	11. 4
16th	"	4¾ lb. Eels	27 cts.	.27
	"	1 Porringer	1/3	.21
18th	"	1 Shovel	4/.	.66
	"	Fish	33 cts.	.33
	"	Cash for Cod Fish	89 cts.	.89
	"	4 lb. Bohea Tea	@ 70 cts.	2.80
20th	"	2½ yards Duck	@ 30 cts.	.75
	"	6 sceins colored Thread	4 cts.	. 4
	"	2 oz. Indigo	@ 16/ per hundredweight	.33
	"	18 lb. loaf Sugar	@ 1/10	5.50

	"	1 1/2 yards tow Cloth	@ 20 cts.	.30
	"	1 stick Twist	3 cts.	. 3
	"	5 1/2 yards blue Kersey	@ 75 cts.	4.12 1/2
	"	Cash paid for Eels	26 cts.	.26
21st	"	1 barrel Beef	\$12	12.—
	"	4 gallons West Indian Rum	@ \$1	4.—
	"	15 lbs. Flax	@ 10d.	1. 8
	"	4 gallons Molasses	@ 50 cts.	2.—
	"	1/2 barrel of Sugar	@ \$15 3/4	7.62 1/2
22nd	"	Cash paid Thomas Hill Postage	\$2.56	2.56
	"	28 lbs. Coffee	@ 31 cts.	8.68
	"	4 lbs. Eells	12 cts.	.12
25th	"	Cash paid for Fish	65 cts.	.65
	"	1/2 peck red top Seed	@ \$2.50	.31
27th	"	7 lbs. Rice	@ 16/6	.17
	"	1 quart Brandy delivered Mrs. Baker	@ \$2.25	.56
30th	"	12 sceins Hambro Thread Number 12		.12
	"	1 1/2 yards Duck	@ 30 cts.	.45
	"	2 1/2 yards Gurrah	@ 24 cts.	.60
31st	"	1/4 lb. Copperas	4 cts. per lb.	. 1
	"	Sundries delivered Sally Newman		1.29
	"	" delivered Jonathan Young		2.65
June 4th	"	1 quart Brandy	@ 9/3 per gallon	.38 1/2
5th	"	7 lbs. Rice	@ 16/6	.17
10th	"	Sundries and cash paid in part for shearing Sheep	33 cts.	.33
	"	28 lbs. Rice	@ 16/6	.68
11th	"	1 bushel Rye	4/6	.75
	"	1 gallon Molasses	3/.	.50
12th	"	1 quart Brandy	@ 9/3	.38 1/2
	"	1 1/2 yards Shoe Binding		. 1 1/2
	"	20 lbs. Fish	@ 2d.	.56
	"	Cash paid for 8 3/4 lb. Veal	@ 6 cts.	.53
13th	"	1 1/4 lbs. dipped Candles	@ 1/.	.21
15th	"	Sundries delivered Jonathan Young		7.75
	"	Veal		.29
17th	"	Paper Pins	@ 12 cts.	.12
	"	4 bushels Potatoes	@ 66 cts.	2.64
18th	"	4 1/4 lb. Soap	@ 8d.	.47
19th	"	1 barrel Pork		20.—
	"	1 Cod Line	4/3	.70
20th	"	4 gallons Molasses	@ 3/.	2.—
	"	2 Pails (best)	@ 25	.50
21st	"	1 peck Salt	@ 75	.18 1/2
	"	14 lbs. Candles	@ 1/.	2.33
	"	Sundries delivered Asa Tracey	18 cts.	.18
22d	"	12 Sable skind	@ 50 cts.	6.—
	"	1 gallon Brandy	9/3	1.54
24th	"	Sundries delivered Richard Shaw		5.93
	"	1/2 doz. large Plates	@ 3/6 per dos.	.29
	"	1 lb. Chocolate	25	.25
July 1st	"	1 corn Broom		.20

2d	"	3 pecks Rye	@ 4/6	.66
3d	"	5 yards Linnen	@ 2/6	2. 8
	"	13 lbs. loaf Sugar	@ 1/10	3.97
5th	"	1½ lbs. Cotton Wool delivered Mrs. Newman	@ 3/6	.88
9th	"	1 pair Florentine Shoes	4/	.66
	"	paid Daniel Wright's Account		3.66
11th	"	Sundries paid Miss Griggs for spinning		1.41
12th	"	18 lbs. Sugar 2d quality	@ \$16	2.57
13th	"	3 pecks Rye	@ 4/6	.56
	"	1 paper Pins	12 cts.	.12
15th	"	1 lb. 20d. Nails	11 cts.	.11
	"	50 ft. merchantable Pine Boards	30 cts.	.30
19th	"	15½ lb. Veal	@ 4½d.	.97
	"	4 lb. Bohea Tea	@ 70 cts.	2.80
	"	3 gallons Molasses	@ 50 cts.	1.50
	"	Boards and Joist	29 cts.	.29
	"	1 quart New England Rum	@ 4/1 per gallon	.17
	"	1 peck Salt	@ 75	.19
20th	"	10¼ lb. Veal	@ 4½d.	.63
	"	6 pint Bowls	@ 2/9 per dozen	.22½
22d	"	2 bushel Baskets	@ 37½ cts.	.75
	"	½ bushel Rye	@ 6/9	.56
23d	"	2¾ lb. Soap	@ 8d.	.30
	"	4 gallons West Indian Rum	@ \$1	4.—
	"	1 pair leather Shoes for Ebenezer	4/6	.75
	"	2 Scythes	@ \$10 per dozen	1.67
24th	"	Sundries delivered Richard Shaw	77 cts.	.77
25th	"	14 lbs. best Sugar	@ \$17	2.12½
	"	1 barrel Beef	@ \$8	8.—
27th	"	14 lbs. Coffee	@ 31 cts.	4.34
	"	42 lbs. best Sugar	@ \$17	6.37
	"	Sundries delivered Daniel Wright for mending Shoes		.33
29th	"	14 lbs. Rice	@ 16/6	.34
	"	½ bushel Rye	@ 6/9	.56
31st	"	4 gallons Molasses	@ 3/	2.—
	"	Sundries delivered Richard Shaw	22 cts.	.22
	"	3 pecks Rye	@ 6/9	.84
Aug. 3d	"	Sundries delivered Richard Shaw	50 cts.	.50
5th	"	Cash paid John Corson	\$2	2.—
	"	1 peck Salt	@ 75 cts.	.19
6th	"	25 bushels Corn	@ 4/3	17.10
	"	1 piece Tape	7d.	.10
8th	"	1½ bushels Rye	@ 6/9	1.68
12th	"	Sundries delivered	25 cts.	.25
	"	Sundries for Fish	33 cts.	.33
	"	½ quintal Codfish	@ \$2.50	1.25
15th	"	4 gallons West Indian Rum	@ 5/	3.33
	"	11¾ lbs. loaf Sugar	@ 1/10	3.59
	"	1 dozen large Button Moulds		. 3
	"	1 stick Twist	3 cts.	. 3

	"	1 bushel Rye	@ 6/9	1.12 1/2
17th	"	Cash paid Thomas Hill's account of Postage		2.14
19th	"	4 1/4 lbs. Soap	@ 8d.	.50
	"	1 paper Pins	12 cts.	.12
	"	1 lb. Chocolate	25 cts.	.25
20th	"	1 scein colored Silk	4 cts.	.4
	"	1 yard coarse Linnen	@ 1/4	.22
	"	5 gallons Molasses	@ 3/	1.50
	"	1 bushel Rye	@ 6/9	1.12 1/2
	"	Fish	53 cts.	.53
22d	"	Sundries paid Daniel Wright's account		1.50
	"	1 1/2 bushels Rye	@ 6/9	1.68 1/2
	"	1 peck Salt	@ 75 cts.	.19
26th	"	1/2 bushel Rye	@ 6/9	.56
28th	"	1 gallon 3 pints West Indian Rum	@ 5/	1.14 1/2
29th	"	1 3 quart Coffee Pot	3/	.50
	"	1 lb. Shott	9 cts.	.12 1/2
	"	1 dozen Needles 3 cts. 1 Thimble 2 cts.		.5
	"	1/2 barrel Beef	@ \$8	8.—
31st	"	1000 ft. merchantable Pine Boards delivered Andrew Kidstone		6.—
	"	1 barrel Sugar	@ \$14	14.—
	"	1/2 bushel Rye	@ 6/9	.56
Sept. 4th	"	1/2 bushel Rye	@ 6/9	.56
	"	1 large Butter Pott	9d.	.12
5th	"	Sundries delivered Mrs. Newman	50 cts.	.50
	"	Cash paid for Fish	3/9	.62 1/2
9th	"	8 lb. Soap	8d.	.89
10th	"	1/2 bushel Rye	@ 6/9	.56
	"	40 lb. Fish	@ 1 1/2 d.	.83
	"	14 lb. Rice	18/	.37
	"	1 colored Tea Pott	1/6	.25
	"	1 sett colored Cups and Saucers	2/.	.33
	"	1 yellow Tea Pott	10d.	.14
	"	2 Sugar Bowls	@ 8d.	.22
12th	"	1 peck Salt	@ 75 cts.	.19
13th	"	3 quart Bowls	@ 6/ per dozen	.25
14th	"	1 paper Pins	12 cts.	.12
	"	Cash for 9 1/4 lb. Lamb	@ 4 1/2 d.	.57
17th	"	9 lb. Pork	@ 8d.	1.—
19th	"	4 lb. Bohea Tea	@ 70 cts.	2.80
20th	"	5 lb. Hyson Tea	@ 1.50	7.50
21st	"	13 lb. loaf Sugar	@ 1/10	3.97
	"	1 pair Florentine Shoes	4/	.66
	"	Cash for 9 lb. Fish	@ 1 1/2 d.	.19
23rd	"	1 peck Salt	@ 75 cts.	.19
	"	8 3/4 lb. Lamb	@ 4 1/2 d.	.54
	"	Barrel Pork	\$20	20.00
25th	"	1 Corn Broom	20 cts.	.20
	"	5 gallons Molasses	@ 3/	2.50
27th	"	1/2 bushel Rye	@ 5/9	.48
	"	4 lb. Soap	@ 8d.	.44

1798-1799

1007

Oct.	28th	" 1 bushel Cranberries	\$1.17	1.17
	3rd	" 8 lb. Fish	@ 3 cts.	.24
	4th	" 11 yards white Flannel	@ 37½ cts.	4.12½
		" 1 Thimble	2 cts.	. 2
		" Sundries delivered Peter Godfrey's account	\$1	1.—
	5th	" 2¾ bushels Rye	@ 5/9	2.63
		" 26½ bushels Corn	@ 5/	22. 8
	7th	" 16½ lb. Soap	@ 8d.	1.83
	8th	" 1 box Candles 48 lb.	@ 1/. Box 1/6	8.25
	10th	" 26 lb. Fish	@ 1½d.	.54
		" 17 lb. "	@ "	.35
	12th	" 1½ yards blue Kersey	@ 75	1.12½
		" 1½ bushels Rye	@ 6/9	1.68
		" 1¼ yards blue Broadcloth	@ 9/.	1.87½
		" 2 dozen large M M Buttons	@ 13 cts.	.26
		" 1 stick Twist	3 cts.	. 3
		" 1 bushel Basket		.37
	15th	" Sundries paid 9½ cord of Wood	@ \$2	19.—
		" 12 sceins colored Thread		.48
	16th	" 1 lb. 11 oz. Butter	@ 20 cts.	.34
		" 6 sceins colored Thread		.48
	21st	" 18 bushels Corn	@ 5/	15. 3
	22nd	" 1 barrel Beef	\$14	14.—
		" 10¼ lb. loaf Sugar	@ 1/10	3.13
	23d	" 2 gallons Molasses	@ 3/.	1.—
	24th	" ¼ hundredweight Rice	@ 20/.	.83
		" 1 lb. Pimento	@ 20 cts.	.20
		" ½ peck Salt	@ 75	. 9½
	26th	" 17 lb. Fish	@ 1½d.	.35
		" 11½ lb. Mutton	@ 4½d.	.72
	28th	" 8 yards Callico	@ 45 cts.	3.60
		" 9¼ cords of Wood	@ \$2	18.50
	29th	" 1 gallon Funnel	3/4	.56
		" 1 horn Combe	7 cts.	. 7
	31st	" 2 pair table Hinges	@ 6d.	.12
		" 2 dozen ½ inch Screws	@ 2½d.	. 7
Nov.	1st	" 1 woodcutter's Saw	7/6	1.25
		" 1 scein Silk, 4 cts., 8 sceins colored Thread		.10
	6th	" 27 lb. Mutton	@ 4½d.	1.68
		" 1½ bushels Rye	@ 6/9	1.68
	7th	" 13 yards quality Binding	@ 2 cts.	.26
		" 6 sceins colored Thread		. 4½
	8th	" 42 lb. best Sugar	@ \$17	6.37½
		" 4 darning Needles	@ 1/8 per hundred	. 1½
	9th	" 4 yards quality Binding	@ 2 cts.	. 8
		" 1 pair men's Shoes	75 cts.	.75
	11th	" To Sundries delivered Josiah Moore		17.27
		" 3 gallons Molasses	@ 3/.	1.50
		" 1 peck Salt	@ 75	.19
	15th	" Sundries paid for Ben Herrings		1.16
	16th	" ½ piece Oil Cloth	@ \$5	2.50

	"	1 barrel Beef	\$14	14.—
18th	"	10 lb. Chocolate	@ 25	2.50
	"	10½ lb. Soap	@ 8d.	1.16
	"	1 pair Wool Cards, No. 3	39 cts.	.39
19th	"	1 lb. Shott	9 cts.	.9
	"	3½ yards white Flannel	@ 37½	1.31
	"	2 Corn Brooms	@ 20 cts.	.40
	"	5 yards shoe Binding	@ 1 ct.	.5
	"	1 Pitcher	@ 4½d.	.6
22d	"	5 lb. 10 oz. Butter	@ 20 cts.	1.12½
23d	"	2 Patridges ³	16	.16
	"	4½ lb. Pilot Bread	@ 7½ cts.	.34
	"	1 lb. Bohea Tea	70 cts.	.70
26th	"	1 peck Salt	@ 75	.19
28th	"	1 Axe	9/.	1.50
	"	½ lb. Pepper	@ 2/.	.16½
29th	"	1 largest Gimblet	1/2	.20
	"	3 Flints	@ 1½ cts.	.4½
30th	"	8¾ cords of Wood	@ \$2	17.50
Dec. 5th	"	3 Ducks	@ 14 cts.	.42
	"	"	66 cts.	.66
	"	7¾ lb. loaf Sugar	@ 1/10	2.36
6th	"	¼ lb. colored Thread containing 28 sceins	@ 5/3	.22
	"	1 2 inch socket Chizzel, 1.7 inches di- ameter		.44
11th	"	2½ gallons Molasses	@ 3/6	1.45½
12th	"	1 pair Taps	1/.	.16
13th	"	3 pecks coarse Salt	@ 5/3	.65
	"	1 bushel damaged Corn	3/.	.50
	"	1 pair Taps	14 cts.	.14
14th	"	66 bushels Corn	@ 92 cts.	60.72
16th	"	1 wooden Bowl	\$1	1.—
	"	½ pint Rum delivered Rolf	12 cts.	.12
	"	3 Ducks	@ 12 cts.	.36
	"	2 bushels Rye	@ \$1.33	2.66
	"	½ dozen Candle Sticks	@ 10/6	.88
	"	Pair Shovel and Tongs	@ \$1.50	1.50
17th	"	5½ lb. Soap	@ 8d.	.61
18th	"	5 gallons Molasses	@ 3/6	2.92
	"	1 barrel Sugar 2 hundredweight and 15 lb.	@ \$14	29.87½
19th	"	Sundries delivered Richard Shaw		2.64
	"	10½ yards Green Baize	@ 30 cts.	3.15
20th	"	6 yards Camblet	@ 28 1/3 cts.	1.70
	"	Sundries delivered Richard Shaw		6.54
	"	2½ lb. soal Leather	@ 1/1	.44
	"	1 pair Vamps	22 cts.	.22
	"	1½ yards blue Broad Cloth	@ \$1.58	2.37
	"	1 scein colored Silk	4 cts.	.4
	"	1 piece Tape	10d.	.14

³ A good example of down east phonetic spelling.

1798-1799

1009

21st	"	1 gallon West India Rum	5/.	.83
	"	4 tin Cups	@ 7d.	.39
	"	3 fancy pint Bowls	@ 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ d.	.23
23d	"	42 lb. Rice	@ 20/.	1.25
25th	"	4 $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. Soap	@ 8d.	.50
	"	1 axe Handle	9d.	.12 $\frac{1}{2}$
27th	"	Cash for 24 lb. Mutton	@ 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ d.	1.50
	"	1 lb. 5 oz. Butter	@ 20 cts.	.26
30th	"	1 peck Salt	@ 75	.19
	"	9 lb. loaf Sugar	@ 1/10	2.75
	"	1 scein colored Silk	4 cts.	.4
31st	"	4 $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. Soap	@ 8d.	.50
	"	36 dozen Eggs at sundry times	@ 16 $\frac{1}{2}$ cts.	6.—
				<hr/> 763.61
				\$763.61
				deduct 196.39
				10 per cent on \$567.22
				<hr/> 56.74 ⁴

" 3 barrels Flour
 " 10 per cent on \$33

@ \$11

820.35

33.—

3.30

\$856.65

Contra credit

41.73

Ballance

814.92

1799

Jan. 17th	By bottle Wine delivered Ebenezer Downs	66	.66
Apr. 6th	1 bushel Corn delivered Colonel Hall	5/0	.83
20th	24 lb. Pork delivered Pince [?] Mar. 27th	@ 16½	4.—
"	48½ lb. for Packet		8. 8
27th	2 Bottles	@ 8 cts.	.16
Nov. To	¾ barrel Pork returned	@ \$20	15.—
"	½ barrel Beef "	@ \$8	8.—
"	5 bushels Corn for use of Packet delivered		
Nov. 1798		@ 6/	5.—
			<hr/> \$41.73

⁴ Despite Cobb's claim that the store did not operate on credit, these figures indicate that he charged his purchases and paid ten per cent interest on the balance. Apparently he had paid \$196.39 in the course of the year.

Chapter XIV

1800

THE record of the activities of William Bingham's agents in Maine for the year 1800 is an unusually full one. There are more items in the Cobb Papers for this year than for any other. This may simply mean that the General was more careful about preserving his correspondence for this year than for the others; on the other hand, there are numerous items which indicate that eastern Maine was becoming more civilized and that the institutions of a more settled society were being established. Unfortunately for William Bingham this gradual change in the character of the country improved the financial condition of his Maine speculation not one whit. The country seemed to be filling up without regard to the efforts of his agents. The heavy drains on his resources continued, but the improvements for which the money was spent failed to produce anything remotely resembling a boom. By the end of the year it was becoming clear that the attempt to force settlement on the Penobscot tract had failed.

Faced with this disagreeable fact, Bingham turned to his Kennebec lands, in hopes that he might have more success in that region. Though he still was anxious to sell the Kennebec Million en masse, if he could, he realized also that the tide of settlement would soon be reaching that property and that it behooved him to make at least minimum preparations to sell these lands at retail. As always, Bingham was anxious to keep expenses down and thus to take only the most essential steps, but it would not do to let this chance for eventual profit go by default. So it was that the year 1800 saw William Bingham shift his attention from the Penobscot to the Kennebec; and as a result, a large proportion of the documents for this year are concerned with the establishment of a program for the Kennebec Million.

That David Cobb was making a name for himself down east is borne out by the fact that this year marks his return to public life. In March he was asked by the Boston Federalists to get out

the vote for their candidate, Caleb Strong;¹ that summer he was appointed a Justice of the Peace for Gouldsborough;² and had he wished for the office, he could have had the position of Probate Judge for Hancock County as well.³ Finally, with Bingham's approval, he determined to run for the State Senate in the fall, a position to which he was duly elected.⁴ With the question of the settling duties soon to come before the legislature, with state, county, and town taxes soon to become a problem for the concern, and above all, with the steady rise of Jeffersonian Democracy in New England and the fear that the Democrats, once in office, might make things hot for large landholders, it was important to have a spokesman for the proprietors in the General Court. It was in this field that General Cobb was to perform some of his most valuable services for the Bingham interests.

The year 1800 must have been a busy one for the General; certainly he was called upon to handle a wide variety of problems. Two towns, Machias and Passamaquoddy, eager to get revenue from the Bingham lands, jumped the gun and levied taxes on the property a year before the exemption had expired.⁵ One Samuel Freeman, agent for the original proprietors of Trenton, asked to be relieved of the costs of the suit which he and his associates had lost when trying to recover that township from Bingham.⁶ The inevitable confidence man, one John Schaeffer, passed through Gouldsborough and apparently touched the General for a loan.⁷ A gentleman from Northampton, Massachusetts, had a lottery prize to sell.⁸ Benjamin Vaughan wanted botanical

¹ See below, pp. 1022-1023.

² His commission, dated 5 July 1800 and signed by Caleb Strong, is in CP.

³ See Cobb to John Avery, Boston, 20 August 1800, in CP.

⁴ See below, pp. 1073-1074 and p. 1076.

⁵ See Josiah Harris to Cobb, Machias, 15 October 1800, and Louis Delesdernier to Cobb, Passamaquoddy, 3 November 1800, both in CP.

⁶ See Freeman to Cobb, Portland, 30 January 1800. Cobb agreed to pay the costs on the advice of Isaac Parker. See Parker to Cobb, Portland, 1 February 1800, and Cobb and Richards to Parker, Gouldsborough, 24 February 1800. All of these letters are in CP.

⁷ See Thomas Pagan to Cobb, Castine, 27 May 1800, and John Schaeffer to Cobb, St. Andrews, 4 April 1800, both in CP.

⁸ See Sylvester Maxwell to Cobb, Northampton, 10 April 1800, in CP.

information on the Mount Desert pea and sent Cobb excerpts from early British travel books commenting on the plant.⁹ Cobb's own lands on the Androscoggin were causing trouble,¹ and provision for his large family was ever a matter of concern to him.

Yet despite this activity and the hard work done to improve the land for settlements, few buyers appeared. A couple of locals bought an island off Mount Desert's Southwest Harbor,² and for a time it looked as if some settlers from the Merrimack Valley might be interested in the Kennebec property; but in the end virtually no one came.³ Nor was the General more successful when he attempted a travelling-salesman tour of western Massachusetts in an effort to attract settlers.⁴ Though David Cobb remained sanguine—at least in his letters to Bingham—it became clearer each year that artificial settlements could not succeed in priming the pump for a land boom down east.

Cony to Cobb, Augusta, 16 January 1800 [CP]

My dear Sir:

Augusta, 16. January 1800

In compliance with your personal request, as also your written favour addressed to me from Hallowell 5th October 1799,⁵ as well as my own engagement to you, we have made a special journey up to the Million Acres, to visit the settlers, ascertain such information from them and of the premises as was attainable at the time and within the period allotted to *one tour*. The following minutes taken on the spot, and from various other sources, are believed to be nearly correct, *to wit*,

	Taken up	Settled		Taken up	Settled
x Abel Ware	1782	1782	Asa Fletcher	1787	1790
x Ephraim Wood	1780	1780	John Ball	1784	1791
x William Fletcher	1780	1780	Amos Heald, Jr.	1785	1790
x Ephraim Heald	1780	1784	Barnabas Eaton	1785	1795

⁹ See Cobb to Vaughan, Gouldsborough, 12 March 1800, in CP. The excerpts, in Vaughan's hand, are also in CP.

¹ See Wilde to Cobb, Hallowell, 2 January 1800, in CP and also below, p. 1032.

² See Welch and Moore to Cobb, Gouldsborough, 3 January 1800, and his reply dated Gouldsborough, 27 January 1800, both in CP.

³ See Joseph Wingate to Cobb, Hallowell, 24 March 1800, in CP.

⁴ See below, pp. 1077–1078.

⁵ This letter is missing from CP.

	Taken up	Settled		Taken up	Settled
	Jonas Heald	1780 1784		Levi Goodrich	1780 1795
x	John Dinsmor	1780 1784		Ephraim Heald, Jr.	1780 1797
x	Amos Fletcher	1783 1784		Daniel Churchill	1784 1797
	Daniel Foster	1784 1784		Amos Heald	1785 1798
	Joseph Russell	1784 1784		William Renolds	1785 1799
x	Joseph Churchill	1783 1785		Thomas Fletcher	1784 1797
	Roger Chase	1785 1785		Solomon Night	1785 1799
x	Joseph Baker	1785 1785		Joseph Cook	1793 1796
x	Joshua Goodrich	1786 1789			
x	Silas Parlin	1780 1789			
	Ezekiel Chase	1785 1787			

Note those with this x mark have framed [?] houses and barns, and all the above settled on the front lots near the river (and hardy good men).⁶

Joseph Bean, Isaac Robbins, Luke Robbins, Joshua Goodrich, Joshua Goodrich, Jr., and John Goodrich settled on back lots in the year 1798. Note there is one grist mill, and one saw mill in this settlement owned and improved by Joshua Goodrich being the only mills above Carriotunk Falls, seated near the mouth of Austin's Stream.⁷ Respecting the quality of the soil and its susceptibility of agricultural improvements, I will confine my present remarks to that part of the tract which will fall within the three southerly ranges of townships, comprehending about twenty townships, the prognised settlement with the experiments already made. The result furnishes data beyond any reasonable doubt that this tract of territory is capable of an easy and advantageous settlement. A flourishing and luxurient product from a proper agriculture, and the soil from analogy to other lands in its vicinage, as well as from actual improvements made, will abundantly reward the labor of the husbandman. Its fertility and goodness has been growing in estimation with every years experience, and a permanent and flourishing settlement is now making in most or all the marginal townships on the southerly part of the tract, which will no doubt open new avenues, and very much facilitate the means of effecting a settlement on this valuable territory belonging to the Honorable William Bingham.

Important discovery

Extensive funds [?] of iron ore near Austin's Stream contiguous to one of the best and first places in the world to build the works. The mine

⁶ Almost all of the above names are listed in the census of 1790 as residing in Carriatunk Town.

⁷ Austin's Stream joins the Kennebec at the present town of Bingham.

can be bro't in scows across the pond with great convenience and 'tis unnecessary to ad the coal may be made (for many years) almost in the forge or furnass yard, and if my information on this subject should prove correct, as there is reason to expect, an establishment of iron works at the place in question would be an object of the first utility and highly promotive of the substantial welfare of the District of Maine.

Useful information

Dinsmor and Foster,⁸ famous hunters, have traversed the Million Acres in all directions, say 'tis well very well accomodated with streams and mill seats, that there is considerable tracts of intervale on the margin of the Dead River, subject to be overflowed, and that there is valuable pine-timber in two parts of the tract only, but very considerable in each, *to wit* on and near the Dead River and near Austin's Stream.

The expence of lotting each township into lots half mile square, in a proper manner, and returning duplicate plans, dissignating the lots into 1st, 2d, and 3d classes, will cost about 250 dollars and a settlement of numerous hardy families can be affected within a short period and at a moderate expence.

On this head I could write a volumn but my other avocations arrest my pen, and conclude these cursory observations with one further remark—that if Mr. Bingham would turn his attention to this tract of territory, commence operations with spirit and prudence, he might realize advantages hardly to be calculated in anticipation.

Believe, dear sir

with great consideration

your friend and humble servant

DANIEL CONY

Your future commands shall have place and presidence.

P.S. George Warren,⁹ attorney at law residing in this place, is sorely afflicted and declining under complicated dropsy, asitis and anasonia and probably enlarged and diseased liver. He bears his affliction with great fortitude and resignation, expects and appears resigned to meet a destiny, which probably will soon terminate his existence.

D. C.

⁸ Presumably the John Dinsmor and Daniel Foster listed above.

⁹ George Warren, the son of General Joseph and Mercy Warren, had begun the practice of law in Winslow in 1792. He was a representative in the General Court and also acted as a land agent. Apparently much of his time was "wildly spent" and his death hastened by "habits of dissipation." See W. Willis, *History of the Law, the Courts, and the Lawyers of Maine*, 178-179.

[On the back of the cover]

The settlers engaged in idea in opening a road to Chaudiere which they think very practicable and would not exceed 70 or 80 miles. More on this and other points hereafter.

*Bingham to Cobb, Philadelphia, 2 February 1800 [CP]*¹

Philadelphia, February 2. 1800

Dear General:

I am very impatient to have the pleasure of hearing from you, having been deprived of any of your letters for a considerable time past.

I do not suppose that any thing of consequence has occurred in the course of your operations, or you would naturally have communicated it.

Neither Baring or myself have received any account of the marriage of our friend Richards, which by the last intelligence we have had reason to believe was on the point of consummation.

It is essentially necessary that some immediate measures should be taken with the Kennebec tract. In one of the letters that I recently wrote to you, I requested your opinion of Mr. Merrick, whom you probably became acquainted with on your excursion to Kennebec. He is a brother in law of Mr. Vaughan, and he has been very actively engaged for some time past in promoting settlements in that neighbourhood. From his knowledge of the country, and its inhabitants he would be better enabled to perform such a service. I think he would be well calculated to entrust the superintendence of these lands to, until I had digested a proper system for a regular course of settlement. In the event of employing him in such a capacity, I wish you to mention to me, what you suppose would be a proper equivalent for his superintendence.

I have heard nothing further from Mr. Cony. I am very anxious to procure a sale for the greatest portion of this property, before I commence any operations for its settlement, which must involve considerable expense. But hitherto my efforts have been unavailing. In the meanwhile my advances, which are exorbitant, increase daily.

As you have no further occasion for the original deeds which I transmitted to you, please to return them by some safe and convenient opportunity.

I am with regard

Dear General

Your obedient servant

WM. BINGHAM

General Cobb

¹ There is a photostatic copy of this letter in William Bingham Letters, 1795-1803, 28-30, at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

Cobb to Bingham, Gouldsborough, 3 February 1800 [CP]

Dear Sir:

Gouldsboro February 3d. 1800

Your letter of December 10th was duly receiv'd. I have delay'd giving you an answer that I might receive Dr. Cony's communication, which I have been anxiously waiting for, and which happily came to hand by the last mail. A copy of it you have inclos'd.

The doctor has not made such a report as I could have wish'd. I know he had not time sufficient to examine the tract and obtain an account of all the inhabitants, but he might have enlarg'd upon what was "the best, cheapest and most expeditious mode for bringing forward the settlement of the country." However, the truth is, that this tract is in a state of settlement of itself, and that little else is required to be done, than having the townships run into lots under the direction of some prudent person who can inform the purchasers when they apply for land, where their lots are and upon what terms they can have them. The iron mine is a valuable discovery, and if it is in quantity as Cony intimates, it will be really a mine of wealth to you, as so little of that mineral has as yet been discover'd in the District of Maine.

I was frequently in company with Mr. Merrick when at Hallowell, and I am much prejudiced in his favour as an active and intelligent person, but I think Dr. Cony, if he will accept, will be more servicable to you as an agent. Not that he possesses the enterprize or intelligence that Merrick does, but he has other qualities that are more important for your service. He was born a Yankee and acquainted with all their cunning. From long residence he is intimately acquainted with the manners and habits of the District of Maine, and possesses extensive influence there. His influence in the government is by no means to be dispised (which at no very distant period you will require). He is appointed by the Treasurer to number the inhabitants on the Million Acres. He is personally acquainted with all the surveyors on the Kennebeck, all of whom he has repeatedly employ'd either for the State, or for individuals for whom he has been agent, and has had this business done 30 per cent cheaper than it can be done for with us. He is a Judge of the Court in the county where your lands are. *He is a great clamourer against you for not attending to the Lands.* He has been educated in the habits of great œconomy, and I believe will not expend your or any other persons money unnecessarily. However worthy and intelligent Mr. Merrick may be, he is a European against whom New England people have too many prejudices. He has lately mov'd into the country, where, at present, he cannot possess any influence, and he is likewise proba-

bly engaged with the Vaughan family in the settlement of a number of new townships which will more or less interfere with your views and intentions. Whenever you have determin'd whom to select for your agent at Kennebeck, I wish you to permit me to make the appointment, or at least to agree with him for his stipend or his pay for his services, as I think you will be thereby subjected to less expence. You may perhaps suppose that from my so warmly advocating Cony, I have an interest in his appointment. I have none separte from yours. I have known him for many years and have always dispis'd him, and in some points he is not the man I could wish for this business, but take him all in all he is the best person for you in that country. The proverb is too true "that if a man is in Hell his best interest is to pay court to the Devil."

On the establishment of a lumber yard at Gouldsboro' I would observe we have one here already on a small scale and it agrees perfectly with my opinion to have it enlarged which I conceive can be done without any additional capital to the store, even to the amount of all the lumber that can be made at this port, but then the quantity would be very inadequate to constitute such a lumber yard as you have an idea of; and I conceive such a yard cannot be established at any port in this country from the lumber made near such a port, as the number of inhabitants near any one place are too few to create such a quantity of lumber as such a yard would require. But if a yard was to be made up of the lumber bro't coast wise from the neighbouring rivers and ports and here ship'd for Europe or the West Indies, it would elivate Gouldsboro' to the rank of a respectable city in the course of a few years; and there cannot be a doubt that a capitol thus managed, by an active commercial character, would produce as much or more profit as from any other branch of commerce in New England. At the same time it would add fifty prices to the value of the land here. I mention these few observations to shew how the materials for an extensive lumber establishment are to be collected, and if the intention is serious for making such an establishment for foreign commerce, I will in some further letter detail what I conceive to be the proper mode of carrying it into execution. This is a favorite subject with me as it has ever been my opinion that commercial and agricultural operations should have gone hand in hand in the improvement of this country, and I am now more convinced that commerce ought to go foremost. In the improvement of interior countries (from whence we have generally drawn our theories of operation), agriculture, from necessity, must be the sole pursuit. Thence the rapid rise of lands in such countries. But in a country of extensive sea coast, where every tree that grows in the forest is at market, commerce

must convey off these forests before agriculture can participate in the improvement of the country. Thence in such countries, the richest soils have no other value than the estimated amount of the value of the trees growing upon them. On a review of the progress of improvement along the extensive sea coast from Boston eastward, many of the now flourishing commercial and agricultural towns, were, since my memory, the meekest hords of disipated lumber men, stealing the forest trees and subsisting intirely by the markets at Boston, not even raising their potatoes on a soil that is now as productive as any in the Union.

The lands that were deeded by Jackson to De la Roche in Trenton and No. 8 still stand on record as the property of La Roche. As you hold the bonds of Walker for the payment of what was due from Madam La Val, is it not probable that some of these may be assigned to you for the payment of these bonds? If they should, it would be prudent for you to take such measures as will put it in your power to prevent the waiste which is now committed upon them by the inhabitants.

We have been operating this season on the Union River. A road is laid open from Taunton Bay to the Great Falls on Western Branch of that river in No. 20,² where will be erected by contract a double saw mill the insuing season. The township is run out into lots of half a mile square. It is a good township of land, rather too much burnt. We intend to make a settlement at the falls the next season. I will endeavour to detail to you our whole proceedings when our accounts are transmitted. I expected these accounts would have been compleated at the close of the year, but the captain of our packet thro' neglect went off on a little voyage to Portsmouth immediately after his return from Boston in December without leaving his accounts, and has not yet returned. They shall be compleated immediately after Mr. Richard's return from Machias, which I expect will be in the course of this month with his wife. Matrimonial frolic and fun are, for a little while, incompatible with business.

I will take particular care that your deeds are returned by some safe hand in the course of the spring.

Richards sometime since intimated his wish to devote a small capital that he could command, in carrying on the West India trade from this port, but he was fearfull he should not be permitted to do it, as his contract did not allow him, while superintending the concerns here, to transact any business for his private emolument. For my part I see no objection

² Number 20 is the present-day Mariaville. Presumably this road followed approximately the same route as the present Route 200 of Maine. See also L. A. C. Johnson, *Sullivan and Sorrento since 1760*, 33-34.

to his having this permission, for whatever capital he puts in operation here will so far benefit the property of this country. But if he is denied, I am jealous his capital will be used else where, since his new connection, which will deprive us of the benefit resulting from the use of it here. This however is only my conjecture. But I think he never will be content to reside here on his present stipend, with no other prospect of property than what is [will] arise from the future progress of this country, however certain that is, more especially since his new connection which will naturally subject him to greater expence.

[No signature]

Bingham to Cobb, Philadelphia, 24 February 1800 [CP]

Dear General: Philadelphia February 24th 1800

I have within some days past received your letter of the 3d instant enclosing the report of Dr. Cony on the lands situate on each side of the Kennebec River.

I wish he had been enabled to make a more satisfactory examination and have reported a more explicit state of the present state and future prospects of this tract, as well as of the number of its inhabitants and the quality of its soil and susceptibility of settlement.

I observe that many settlers have already taken possession of some of the lands on the margin of the tract. It will be necessary to have all their names recorded and authentic proof obtained of the period when they commenced their improvements, with a view to a deduction to be obtained from the State of the settlement duty, except that the State will relinquish (as has been the case on various other occasions) the amount of this claim.

Should an iron mine exist on Austins's Stream, within the boundaries of the tract, and the ore prove of good quality, I am well persuaded of its eventual value. But this discovery does not seem to be well ascertained.

I observe the decided preference you give to the employment of Dr. Cony as an agent. I feel the force of your observations, as connected with the advantages I may derive from his weight of character and influence in the District. But you seem to confess that his intelligence is not so great, nor would his exertions be so active as those of Mr. Merrick. I have been induced to entertain a high opinion of Mr. Merrick from the report that has been made to me, and his ideas of that country and the most æconomical and effectual mode of improving it, have been very satisfactory. I

herewith send you a copy of his reflections on the subject, which you will peruse at your leisure. However I am well aware of the force of your remarks with respect to Dr. Cony and I wish you to inform me very particularly of his competency to undertake such a charge, as relative to his other engagements, and the sum you suppose would be a proper equivalent for his services. Perhaps some other mode might be adopted to gain his good will, in supporting my views and opposing malicious and discontented people, whose clamors it may be necessary to appease.

I wish you had detailed your observations with respect to the establishment of a lumber yard at Gouldsborough, which would have been very instrumental in enabling us to form a correct opinion on the subject, but for want of such materials and information, it is impossible to decide, and be sure of a rational result.

I have no connection with De la Roches lands in No. 8, nor do I know to whom he sold them. I expect very shortly to have all impediments removed with respect to the purchase made by Walker for Madame Leval. As there is a body of most excellent lands in these townships, in the vicinity of navigable water, I think some settlements may be readily formed on them, and at high prices for the soil. It will be recollected that there is a great deal of bottom lands on Union River.

As soon as your accounts are received, with the observations that you promise to annex to them, relative to your proceedings during the last year, I will write you very minutely on the subject thereof.

Having so strong a personal regard for Richards, I have been highly gratified at hearing of his marriage, which I ardently wish may render him completely happy. I shall have the pleasure of writing to him, by this conveyance. I am glad to find that you mean to avail yourself shortly of some good opportunity to forward my deeds.

I wish you to inform me whether they have been recorded in such manner that if the originals were destroyed or lost, authenticated copies could be had from the records, which would supply the place of the originals. I think the copies and not the originals were recorded.

In anxious expectation of your next communication, I am with sincere regard

Dear General

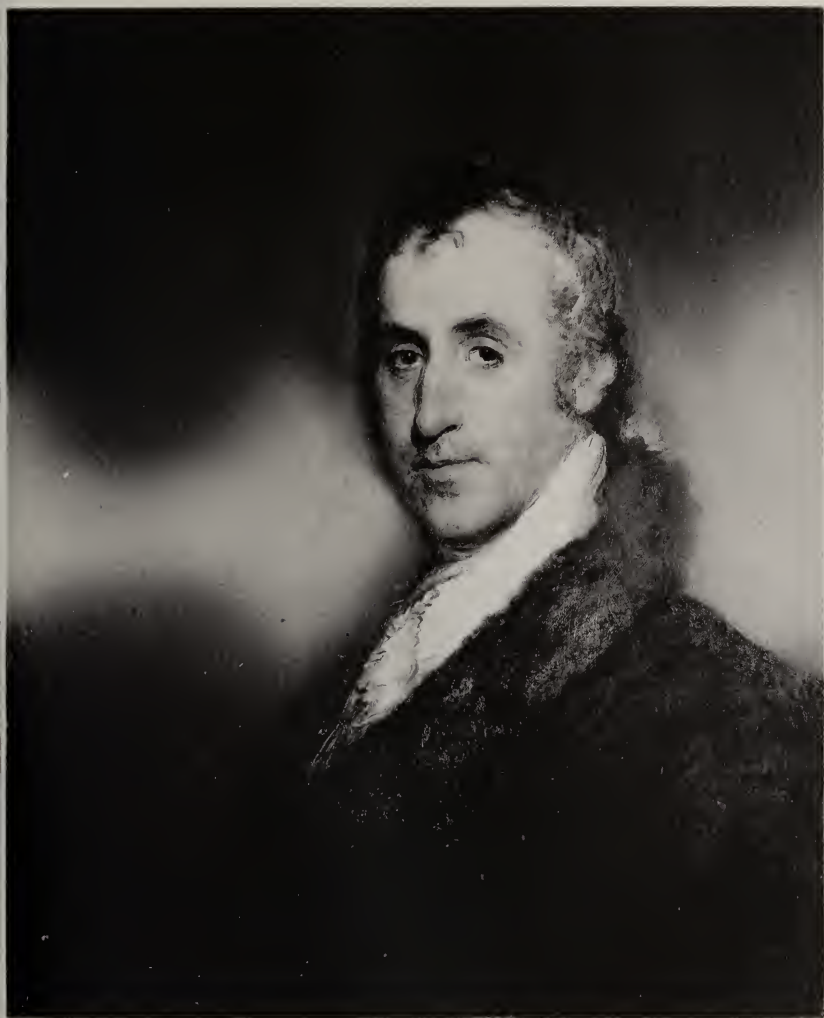
Your obedient humble servant

WM. BINGHAM

General David Cobb
Gouldsborough



Mrs. John Richards
The former Sarah Coffin Jones of Machias
Portrait by Gilbert Stuart



John Richards

Representative of the Baring and Hope Interests
in the Management of the Maine Lands

Portrait by Gilbert Stuart

*Cobb to Bingham, Gouldsborough, 5 March 1800 [BP]*³

Gouldsborough March 5th. 1800

Dear Sir:

By the last mail I receiv'd your short letter of 2d. ultimo. Mr. Richards with his wife and friends have returned here from Machias, and for the fortnight past we have had the usual dissipation and riot attending such cases, at least as much of it as our city can afford, consisting of his family and mine.

In my letter of the 3d. ultimo I made some observations on yours of the 10th. December last. I will now notice the remaining part of that letter.

I am very sorry that the remarks I made in my letter of November last, on the neglect of making operations on the Kennebeck Tract, and which you notice, should have interfer'd in any instance with your views and intentions respecting that country, as it never occur'd to me that my private correspondence with you would ever be used as substantial documents in the sale of that property, and as they were dictated by the purest motives to your interest, a duty I have ever conceiv'd incumbent on me in the station I am in. But it would be well to remember that any future favours you may wish to receive from this government, either on account of the settling duty, or a prolonging the period of taxing the lands, will be in proportion to your exertions and expenditures for bringing forward the settlement of them. Under these impressions I made use of those observations to excite your attention to a subject in which, I conceive, your highest interest is concerned.

I am very sensible that the rise of this country is not so rapid as you and perhaps the gentlemen concern'd with you could wish. But when I look back and see that I have not been here five years, that at the time of my arrival the land in this country was worth nothing, the few inhabitants that were here had very little more ideas of property than the savages, and the only use they made of the soil was to procure the winter forrage for their cattle that they might plunder the forrest at that season, and on this plunder they subsisted; now the number of inhabitants are much increas'd, partly from emigrations but chiefly from the natural increase of the country, many of them raise their bread and other provisions, they have generally an idea that there is such a crime as trespass, and the price of land is from one to three dollars per acre—considering the local situation of this country, as to its remoteness from the natural emigration, the means by which such countries must rise, both agricultural

³ There is an almost identical copy of this letter in CP.

and commercial, and the little that have been used of either to effect this rise, I think, even under all these embarrasments, that few countries in the Union, within that period have risen faster.

We have had a delightfull winter, no ice in our harbour and no more snow than was necessary for the conveniency of passing and for the business of the country. If we could always have such winters, this would be the most agreeable climate in America, as we have no diseases but old age.

I mentioned some time since, the public's occupying this harbour for their marine. My information then was wrong respecting the tides. I have since observ'd them—they are from 17 to 23 feet. Whether the United States will at present conceive it to be an object to possess themselves of this harbor is not for me to determine, but sooner or later they must have it, as there is none equal to it, under all circumstances, in the District.

I hope in the course of another week we shall have our accounts ready to be transmitted.

I am dear sir, with esteem and
respect, your obedient servant
DAVID COBB

Edward H. Robbins to Cobb, Boston, 8 March 1800 [CP]

My dear Sir:

Boston March 8th 1800

Doubtless you have been informed of the intention of electing the Honorable Caleb Strong as Governor at the approaching choice. I ought to apologize to you for my impertinence perhaps, because I well know your uniform support of the common cause. But information may be usefull to you. The opposition, having selected Mr. Gerry for their candidate, who is really a man of more weight of character than they have ever before supported, and Mr. Gill,⁴ being determined to take his chance for the chair, we think we shall want all our strength in every part of the State. Rely upon it that no other man but those three will receive any support from any quarter—any suggestions to the contrary will be merely for division. I have made this communication that you may make every arrangement in your vicinity that prudence dictates. We shall make no opposition to Mr. Gills reelection as Lt. Governor but intend to leave people to act for themselves upon that particular and all others as it respects their government. But its duration seems to grow more hazardous every day,

⁴ Moses Gill had served as Lieutenant Governor under Increase Sumner and upon Sumner's death had acted as governor until succeeded by Caleb Strong.

and I see not what is to prevent a great revolution, at the approaching election of President, but that Providence whose benignity has saved us from many tribulations.

I am with sentiments of sincere regard

Your very humble servant

EDWARD H. ROBBINS⁵

Honorable David Cobb, Esquire

*Cobb to Bingham, Gouldsborough, 19 March 1800 [BP]*⁶

Dear Sir:

Gouldsborough March 19th. 1800

Inclosed you will receive our accounts for the last year.⁷ In our operations we have been directed by the general principle of forming interior agricultural settlements with communications to them, and so arranged that in future when a road is opened from or near to the narrows of Penobscot River to the Schoodic it will naturally pass thro' these settlements. This measure happily unites another of great importance, that of preventing the plunder of the timber from above, by the inhabitants who live below, and as at these settlements we have mills, we contemplate profiting by them in the making of lumber, so as to have some immediate returns for the expence of the establishment. At the same time the agricultural improvements will be in progress. As a measure prior to all others in the improvement of this country it was necessary that houses should be erected at this place as well as the repair of those that were in the purchase, not only for our own accommodation but as an accommodation for all those that should arrive here, either as settlers for the interior country or as residents at the port. The expence of this measure has much exceeded the estimates, as indeed almost all operations do in new countries. A small additional expence in the course of the insuing year will compleat all we contemplate in this department.

That you may have a better view of our proceedings I will divide my observations under the different heads of our several departments, viz.,

Road Making. This includes two roads, one from the head of Taunton Bay on the line between the Townships Nos. 8 and 9, thence proceeds

⁵ E. H. Robbins was the principal owner of Robbinston, a township on the Passamaquoddy. See M. Greenleaf, *A Survey of the State of Maine*, 407. He was later Lieutenant Governor of Massachusetts.

⁶ There is an almost identical copy of this letter in CP.

⁷ These accounts are in BP and copies of them in CP. For a summary of the concern's financial condition, see Appendices C and D.

north and northwesterly into No. 14 across the outlet of Webb's Pond, call'd Webb's Brook, and over a very fine tract of land in the same township to the falls on the Eastern Branch of Union River in No. 20, from thence to the Great Falls on the Western Branch of the same river and near the northern line of the same township. This is the place we call Mariaville, at which will be erected by contract this year, and for which advances have already been made, a large dam, a double saw mill and a small house for the mill man to reside in, and we intend, if possible, to have two or three farming settlements in the neighbourhood in the course of the year. This road is about 18 miles in length, but there is neither bridges or causeways on it at present. The other road is from near Annsburgh Settlement in No. 17 into No. 23 north of it about five miles in length.⁸ At this place we likewise propose to form a farming settlement of three families in the course of this year.

Surveying Department. In this we have had run out Townships Nos. 20 and 23 into half mile square lots, all that part of Trenton that belongs to us into one hundred acre lots, and the settlers lots in Nos. 8 and 9, together with ascertaining some lines in the other townships.

House Building. This department has absorbed more than one half of all our expences in the country. We have three good new houses, one of which is all finish'd in which Mr. Richards resides. The other two are not intirely finish'd tho' a family resides in one of them. And three old houses, two of which are good. I reside in one and the other two have families in them. However expensive this department has been, it was absolutely necessary for any of the contemplated improvements of this country, and I have not a doubt that future experience will amply justify the measure. An additional expence, of from 1,000 to 1,300 dollars will be necessary for finishing the houses and wharf and making such repairs and alterations in the store as are proposed.

Annsburgh Settlement. I presume you are already inform'd that this settlement is at the Great Falls on Naraguagus River in the north west part of Township No. 17, Middle Division, at which we have a saw mill, a farm house and about ten acres of land clear'd up. Two settlers are at this place, but unhappily not such farmers as we want. We have loan'd to them two cows, a horse, and two yoke of oxen to assist them this winter in getting logs to the mill, on such conditions as will afford them the means of paying for their winter subsistance by their labour, and thence a part of what is now charged to this settlement will be repaid. It is extreemly unfortunate that the people of this country have so little knowledge of

⁸ This would run from present-day Deblois to present-day Beddington.

farming. Partly from this cause, but probably more from the rainy and late season of last spring, we were depriv'd of a crop at this settlement which would have repaid in some measure the expence of making it.

Lumber Rents. This is a painfull subject to me and the chief source of all my ill nature towards the people of this country. We have not receiv'd any thing as yet on this account, but the prosecutions that were commenc'd the last year, has bro't some of the great rogues to terms, and in future the Union River people, I presume, will be regular in their payments, and from them we expect to receive timber rents for two years past. I wish I could say we had the same expectations from the people of Machias; we shall, however, receive something from them in the spring. A circumstance which I will here mention is one cause of our obtaining so little from the people of Machias who git their logs on the Western Branch of that river, which is, that No. 23, Eastern Division, tho' a Lottery Township, was not deeded to you, thence the logs that are brought down that branch come, chiefly, from this township, when I presume nine-tenths of them are from our townships. I wish you to recollect, if possible, why this Township No. 23 was left out of your deeds from the Commonwealth, when as a Lottery Township it was included in the contract. If no reason can be assign'd for it, it must have been an omission and ought to be rectified by an application to the Committee or perhaps to the legislature.⁹

Saw Mills. Nos. 1 and 2 in this town and No. 7 were under rent to two persons who have impos'd upon our kindness in delaying the payment of the last years rent. We have settled with one of them since our accounts were made up and shall probably obtain the rent in the course of this and the next year. The other we have not yet settled with. He is a poor devil, but we may perhaps obtain the amount of the rents in time. These rents will appear in our next accounts. The little credit these mills have in our present accounts is occasioned by the short time they were in our possession after the last lease, and before they were put into the hands of the present occupiers with whom we hope to succeed better than with the last. The debit to these mills are advances to the present occupiers and will be repaid in the spring.

Sundry Expences. This contains all the expences of our prosecutions the last year, and for which notes were taken on interest to be paid in the spring, thence more than 200 dollars of the expences of this department will be receiv'd again.

Packet. In this we have not succeeded so well as we had the best rea-

⁹ Number 23 is the present Centerville.

son to expect. Our captain we conceive has not persued the business with the accustom'd activity, and we much suspect that he thinks it not his interest that we should be successfull in it. Whatever the cause may be, we propose to exchange our present vessel for a smaller one which will require less expence to navigate her, less time to load her, and thence will perform more trips in a season, will take less lumber to a market of uncertain profit, and leave more here to a certain one, for the supply of those vessels that annually visit this port for lumber. It may be observed that a suit of new sails with which this vessel was supplied the last fall, cost as much as she stands indebted. But we conceive she ought to have kept herself whole, besides a profit.

Store. This measure has succeeded pretty well considering the object of benefiting the country by exciting industry and lessening the premium of retail from one hundred to 50 per cent and receiving lumber in return at the usual price with the necessary losses attending bad survey's, and the accustom'd impositions on novices in the business.

Townships. Under this head we include all taxes paid for or money receiv'd from any township, designating the name or number. You will observe that we have receiv'd money for some settlers lots and a past payment for 2 lots of land in No. 12.¹ We have engaged to settlers lots of land on Mount Desert, Trenton, Nos. 8 and 11,² in the course of this year, and the spirit of purchasing land is much increas'd among the people, and will continue to increase in proportion as we can exclude them from trespassing on our lands.

This detail'd view of our operations in the several departments will, I hope, afford you such information as will enable you to form an opinion of what we have done and of the situation we are in, and from thence, to determine whether the measures we have persued are agreeable to your wishes, and whether a persuit of the same would meet your approbation. My opinion is to continue, and to occupy interior situations on all the rivers that communicate with the sea, building mills and forming agricultural settlements at the same, opening communications from one to the other, and finally opening the great road from Penobscot River to the Schoodic thro' all these different settlements. Our house building department will be at an end after another year. Our store and packet are absolutely necessary for our operations and are provided for. As an inducement for [you] to continue the expenditures in this country, you have only to recollect that it is the governments money that you are using for your own emolu-

¹ Number 12 is the present Columbia.

² Number 11 is the present Cherryfield.

ment, as I think you may rest assured that in proportion to these expences will be the sum that you will have to pay the government ultimately for any deficient settlers.

I am dear sir with great esteem
Your obedient servant
DAVID COBB

Cobb to Wilde, Gouldsborough, 25 March 1800 [CP]

Dear Wilde: Gouldsboro' March 25th. 1800

I receiv'd your letter of the 2d. of January with its inclosures. Your departure soon after for Boston prevented an answer, and I should not now have given you this, presuming you had not yet returned, had I not receiv'd a letter by the last mail from Parker, who inform'd me that he was with you at Wiscasset where you and your wife were well and proceeding on a friendly visit to Warren.

Mr. Fellows had anticipated your draft, by sending to me an order on his brother at Boston for the money, which I forwarded for payment, soon after the receipt of your letter and it is passed to your credit.³ Mr. Vaughan's notes and abstract I shall notice hereafter. Inclos'd you will receive a plan of the gore, a copy from one I formerly receiv'd from you. If you think it best, perhaps you had better not distress Swift, if the money now due is properly secured.⁴

I have requested Dr. Cony by a letter of this date to present you his account for his services in going to the Million Acres in the fall past, and I have now to request you to pay it, if you have it in your power, and forward to me the account or the amount of it. If I have no money in your hands, I will repay it to you when I have the pleasure of seeing you at Castine. I promis'd the Doctor an honorable return for this business, and I hope he will not be too bashful in estimating his services.

We have pass'd a delightful winter—no ice in our harbour and not more snow than was required for passing the roads and the business of the country. If we could always have such winters, this would be the best climate in the Union, as we have no diseases but old age.

I hope, when you was in Boston, you did not omit making such arrangements as to secure to yourself Dutton's house and land, with the land

³ See Gustavus Fellows to Cobb, Number 22, 22 January 1800, in CP.

⁴ This refers to Cobb's gore of land on the Androscoggin in the present town of Leeds, called Littleboro' before 1801. Swift may have been Dr. Foster Swift of Taunton, an old friend of Cobb's who may have been concerned with the General in this purchase.

where your office is. Be assured you cannot have so good an establishment in the town for so little money.⁵

We have all been well thro' the winter excepting Mrs. Cobb who has been afflicted with sore eyes almost to blindness, occasioned, I imagine, from the glare of a bright sun and the snow. She is now much better. I have had the usual pains of advancing years and a broken back which have [torn] me in winters. Mrs. Cobb, Mary, Debby Barnum, and all the boys, Thomas, Ebenezer, Henry, and George, desire their particular love to Mrs. Wilde and children not forgetting your honour.⁶

My friend Richards, you already know, has found, since he came to Maine that it is best for man not to lodge alone in cold weather, and has accordingly taken to wife the young Miss Jones of Machias. They have been at house keeping for six weeks past. This event has made our city alive during the winter, by regular exchanges [*sic*] of visits between us and Machias. Even Bruce⁷ has broke thro' his mountain of indolence and has made a visit to Gouldsboro'.

I am dear sir with my best love to Mrs. Wilde

Your affectionate friend and servant

D. C.

My compliments to Mr. Vaughan and family, Mr. Merrick and family, Mr. Robbins and family, and indeed to all who know me, not forgetting your honest neighbour Cutter and family.⁸

S. S. Wilde, Esquire

*Cobb to Bingham, Gouldsborough, 26 March 1800 [CP]*⁹

William Bingham, Esquire

Gouldsboro, March 26th. 1800

Dear Sir:

By the last mail I was favor'd with your letters of the 24th and 28th ultimo.¹

⁵ I assume this refers to land in Hallowell, in which case it might be the property of Samuel Dutton, who is listed in the census of 1790 as living there. Why it was necessary to make arrangements in Boston I do not know.

⁶ This is one of the rare places in CP where Cobb mentions his wife and children.

⁷ Phineas Bruce, the lawyer.

⁸ Probably Chandler Robbins, a graduate of Harvard who had settled at Hallowell in 1791 as a merchant. See E. H. Nason, *Old Hallowell on the Kennebec*, 132. I have not been able to identify neighbor Cutter.

⁹ There is a photostatic copy of this letter in William Bingham Letters, 1795-1803, 41-44, at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

¹ The second of these letters, asking about a tax sale of Madame de Leval's land, is in CP.

So far as I ever contemplated a system for your agency at Kennebeck, you have in my letter of November last. If that had meet with your approbation, my intention was to have visited that country and conferr'd with the person that you should have selected for the agent, as to the amount of his stipend and on the business he would have to persue, presuming that, as either of the persons who were in contemplation for this agency would reside at their houses, and but a part of their time would be taken up in superintending your concerns, that a sum from 2 or 3 to 500 dollars per annum would be consider'd as an adequate return for their services, but as I never convers'd with any person there on the subject, I am not able to say what they would consider as satisfactory.

I believe that Doctor Cony is under no engagements that can interfere with his taking charge of your lands at the Kennebeck. He has heretofore been in public life as a Senator and Representative, but at present he is neither—he is a Judge of the County Court and an acting Justice of the Peace, and is generally employ'd in adjusting little disputes among the people by reference or otherwise, and he is likewise employ'd by gentlemen who own townships of land in that country, to have them survey'd and run into lots, for which he charges some trifling sum for his time and attention. How far you can command his influence and good will in support of your views in opposing the malice and discontent or rather the envy of others, without giving him this agency, I am unable to say. Perhaps he may be hereafter employ'd in some business of your concerns that may benefit him, but if you have not committed yourself, you cannot do better than give him the appointment. In any event, let the appointment of your agent be a temporary measure, as I am persuaded that in the course of a short period, you will find it much to your advantage to have a person, who resides on the lands, for your agent, and by that time it is more than probable that a character who may answer all your purposes may be found there, and who would think himself happy to transact all your business for a much less sum than you will now have to give. I have indeed, my doubts, if it was not for securing the influence and interest of Cony and his party, whether it would not now be the best measure, to procure a respectable, intelligent and trustworthy farmer or surveyor or both characters united, to go and reside upon the lands as a settler and to be employ'd as your agent there. He would answer all the purposes you want at present, and I presume he can be obtain'd for the sum, or less, I have already mentioned as a stipend for the agent at Hallowell.

The lands you observ'd advertis'd for sale as Madam La Val's, in Tren-

ton have I suppose been sold, as have a quantity of La Roche's land, for taxes; but as the proceedings of the town relatively to the taxes on these lands, have been illegal, all these sales will finally be sett aside. This is the reason why we did not purchase them—they sold for 15 cents per acre. Madam La Val has only 200 acres of land on record as belonging to her in Trenton. All the land deeded by General Jackson to La Roche still stands in his name on record. This circumstance has been a matter of surprise to me, as I always supposed La Roche and La Val made some division of this property after Jackson had deeded it, and that Walker was secured upon it for the loan he made to Madam La Val. But none of this appears, and La Roche can at any time give a good title in the sale of the whole property.²

It is the copies of your deeds from the Commonwealth, excepting the first, that was put on record, as you was not at the time of recording, in possession of any other of the originals. I should think it best, when you git possession of all the original deeds to have them recorded, and then a copy of that record is as valid as the original; but a copy from record of a copy must be attended with plane evidence that the original has been lifted, or it cannot support your title.

I have now to request your attention for a moment to a subject that I have paid but little attention too for some time past, and that is my private concerns. In the beginning of May I shall transmit my private and loan accounts and there will then be a ballance due on loan account of about 700 dollars. This sum I wish to have your permission to postpone the payment of 'till after another year, and to anticipate, in the months of May or June, 1,000 dollars of my next annual stipend, and the remainder of it at the beginning of the next winter. I make this as a particular request, as I have found, by endeavouring to lessen the loan account, altho' I am annually in the receipt of 500 dollars more than I receive from you, that I am too much shortened for the maintainance of my family and the education of my children. If this meets your approbation you may perhaps find it convenient to have the business negotiated thro' Mr. Codman.

I am, dear sir
with esteem and respect
Your most obedient servant
D. COBB

² Apparently Cobb was right in his account of the tax sale. At least De la Roche kept title to his property for another twenty years. For the reacquisition of most of this property by the Bingham Trustees, see above, pp. 171-172.

Bingham to Cobb, Philadelphia, 3 April 1800 [CP]

Dear Sir:

Philadelphia April 3d 1800

I have to acknowledge receipt of your letter of the 5 March. I observe that our friend Richards with his cara sposa, had returned to Gouldsbrough, and that you were deeply engaged in scenes of unusual dissipation, on this festive occasion.

I am well persuaded that my interests would be promoted by a devoted attention to the Kennebec tract, with respect to improvement and settlement.

But the expence that would attend the same, and the time that must be given to the operation, are powerfull motives to oppose as energetic an effort, as has taken place with respect to the Penobscot tract. However, I am well aware that something should be done, on a more æconomical scale, in order to insure the favors of the government, and to prevent the effects of that indisposition towards my interests, which will arise out of a knowledge of my inattention to this object. I therefore in a former letter requested you to inform me on what terms Dr. Cony's services could be engaged, as you seem (and with very plausible reasons) to give a decided preference to him over Mr. Merrick. I wish a number of the townships to be immediately surveyed, and prepared for settlers. If the intelligence I have received from that quarter, and concerning those lands, is to be relied on (and it comes from very respectable authority), there will be but little difficulty in procuring settlers.

If I fail in making a sale of the whole, or a great portion of this property to some monied men or to a company, I would then be disposed to sell some of the best townships, on improving leases.

But I am entirely ignorant of the price I ought to ask for them, having heard such contradictory reports concerning the value of lands in that quarter, from different persons. I did expect I should have had some aid, in point of information from General Knox, but a long period has elapsed since I have heard from him, which inclines me to suppose that he has become very indifferent on the subject. My advances have been extremely heavy, and I can see but little prospect of a reimbursement. I think there is some prospect of these lands rising in value on the return of peace, as the trade of the country will become more contracted, and the merchants will have a surplusage of funds, which will be seeking employment, and which cannot be more profitably invested than in lands.

Having a desire of exhibiting very serious intentions of operating upon the Kennebec tract, I wish you to take the most effectual measures in or-

der to commence our operations and inform me the result of your intercourse with Mr. Cony on the subject.

I am with sincerity and esteem

Dear General

Your obedient humble servant

WM. BINGHAM

General Cobb

Wilde to Cobb, Hallowell, 4 April 1800 [CP]

Dear General:

Hallowell April 4th 1800

The inclosed letter was handed me by our friend Mr. Wingate,³ who requested me to forward it by the first mail. He tells me, and perhaps has written you the same, that the uncommon liberality of your proposals has excited the astonishment of all to whom they have been made known, and the suspicions of some who are looking out for establishments that in accepting them they will be subjected to some uncommon hardships and deprived of all the privileges and pleasures which result from the social relations. They cannot be persuaded to believe, that any one would invite them by terms so flattering to any place but some savage desert or uninhabited and uninhabitable wilderness, and altho' they have the privilege of returning enriched by the removal, yet their fears and their weakness lead them to prefer their present poverty, rags, and misery to the independence and wealth which would follow the exertions of a few years of enterprise and industry.

In your favour of the 26th ultimo which I received by yesterdays mail, I notice your directions in regard to Dr. Coney whose bill I shall discharge whenever presented, and the ballance which may be due you shall be paid when I have the pleasure to meet you at Castine. The money due from Swift is secured by mortgage on the land originally sold him, and shall remain as it now does unless you may think it best to take possession of the land, as he has abandoned it to a man to whom he sold his equity of redemption and who was to have paid the mortgage some months since. You will probably recollect that I mentioned to you the case of John Jennings, who has hitherto wholly neglected any measures to insure the privilege allowed him as a settler. The old gentleman died a few weeks since, and his sons are now desirous to pay the forty dollars and interest and to receive a deed. You will be good enough to give me instructions, as I con-

³ This was presumably the letter from Wingate to Cobb dated Hallowell, 24 March 1800, in CP. Wingate was the man who had been trying to interest people from the Merrimack Valley to settle on the Kennebec.

sider they have no legal claim whatever, the old gentleman having uniformly refused to do any thing about the business.⁴

I am gratified in hearing that the winter has passed away so pleasantly tho' I regret the indisposition of Mrs. Cobb, and the complaint in your back which in some measure must have checked your enjoyment of it. Mrs. W. has likewise suffered very much, tho' she is now nearly recovered. During my absence in Boston she was afflicted with the rheumatism in her right shoulder. She had nearly recovered when we made the excursion mentioned to you by Mr. Parker. On her return she was again violently seized with the same complaint and in the same limb, attended with occasional spasmodick affections in the stomach, which gave us considerable alarm and which has rendered her very feeble and incapable of digesting even the most simple diet until within a few days in which she has recovered with much rapidity. This I believe is to be imputed in some measure to composure of mind, which had been disturbed by the sickness of a servant girl in the family, who for some days was thought dangerously ill of the *putrid soar throat*, a distemper which we esteem contagious, and from the infection [torn] which we could not wholly remove the children. The girl however has been recovered for some time, and the children are all well. We are not wholly free from apprehension however, and until some weeks are elapsed we shall look forward with fear and trembling.

Mrs. Wilde joins me in presenting to you our respectful regards, as likewise to Mrs. Cobb and family, to Mrs. Tillinghast⁵ and Miss Barnum. I have enclosed a few lines for Thomas, and I beg you to have the goodness to offer my best respects to Mr. Richards and his lady, with whom I am not without hopes we shall have the pleasure to meet at Castine.

With sentiments of esteem and respect

I am, my dear sir,

Your friend and servant

SAM S. WILDE

Bingham to Cobb, Philadelphia, 10 April 1800 [CP]

Dear General:

Philadelphia April 10th 1800

I have to acknowledge receipt of your letter of March 19th, inclosing

⁴ For the arrival of the Jenningses in Littleboro', see A. J. Coolidge and J. B. Mansfield, *A History and Description of New England, Maine*, 187.

⁵ The wife of one of the few new settlers in Gouldsborough whom Cobb had been able to attract. See above, p. 549, note 3.

the accounts of last year relative to expenditures for settlement of our Maine Lands.

I have paid attention to your remarks on the subject of the various operations, in which you are most pointedly engaged, and shall make a few observations thereon, previous to which, there is one consideration, which naturally occurs, which ought to be attended to: that is, what are the prospects, after the experience we have had of nearly five years, to induce us to incur such an amount of annual expence? If the country is not sufficiently inviting, or is placed too remote from the current track of emigration, it would certainly be more expedient to wait patiently for our share of advantages, than to make such large expenditures in order to force them. Since May 1796, my share of these disbursements, calculating interest thereon, has been upwards of \$20,000, and the other party an equal sum—(not including the advance previous to May 1796) which makes an amount beyond \$40,000. This is an immense sum, considering the advantages which appear hitherto to have resulted, for I do not observe that we have much increased our population, and that new settlers are not to be obtained without very extraordinary encouragement, far beyond what is usually given in new countries. I did suppose that at this period, we should have commenced our receipts of money, and have had a surplus, after paying all the expences incident to our improvements.

You must not suppose that I am inclined to arrest the progress of any expence absolutely essential.

I only wish to direct an attention towards the amount of expenditures, as contrasted with the advantages that are likely to result, which every prudent man will naturally compare, before he determines on any heavy advance of money.

Including interest, I have already paid \$158,000 for these lands more than I have received, which, with my advances (and responsibility as connected with these lands, being upwards of \$50,000), makes the immense sum of \$208,000 specie already disbursed. You will naturally be induced to believe that I am very anxious to reimburse myself, for these very heavy payments, some of which at particular periods, when money was very scarce, have cost me great sacrifices to make. But as yet, I see no prospect of accomplishing my object, even if I was inclined to sell these lands at first cost, including charges and interest.

If the State is disposed to relax in its demand for the settling duties, from a generous consideration of the exertions and expenditures we have made, I shall be very happy to avail myself of the advantage, and I believe precedent exist, where success has attended the application, where

circumstances of far less pretensions have supported the measure.

Your first remarks are on road cutting. You and Mr. Richards are the best judges of the direction these roads ought to take. But would it not be expedient to confine yourselves to such roads as lead to such part of the country favorable from local situation and quality of soil, for immediate settlements, and increase your roads in proportion as you possess the means of forming and extending your settlements, from an increase of inhabitants? For, if the roads you make are not frequented, they will soon be choaked by the growth of wood, and the labor and expence will have to be renewed. However, roads are essential to the improvement of a new country, and I am surprized to find so small a sum, compared with the aggregate expences, appropriated to this object. It appears a bad sign of the state of our country, in various points of view, when bargains cannot be made for labor and improvements, the greatest portion of which shall be payable in land. In other parts of the District, I well know that in very extensive settlements, very little money has been disbursed on these accounts, for the persons who owned the property, did not possess it.

Many advantages are derived from making a contract of this nature. It interests a number of persons in the soil, and induces them, when they have become proprietors, to the improvement thereof, which must always be the most essential object of our attention. Besides, these lands receive additional value in their estimation, from the very circumstance of ownership.

Surveyors Department

This appears a very high charge indeed, amounting to upwards of \$932! I have no doubt that every attention to œconomy has been paid on your part, but it convinces me, that labor is not to be procured on the same terms, as in other parts of the District, where roads, as well as surveying can be contracted for, at very different rates, and a part of the amount payable in lands, as will be evident by referring to Mr. Merrick's letter. I always supposed that townships could be run out into settler's lots, at a fixed rate by contract, especially when cash was paid for the same, but it appears that Nos. 20 and 23 have cost \$556, which is far beyond the price usually paid by contract. In addition to the above mentioned sum, there is \$169 for freight and supplies from store. As you were of opinion that it would be necessary to have surveyors engaged for the season, to run out the lines of the settler's lands, I suppose that operation is performed, and that there will be no necessity of engaging them in any other way hence forward than by contract, for each township that is wanted for settlement.

House Building

I agree with you that this account has amounted to a very considerable sum, and is an additional proof of the difficulty of procuring settlers, when such heavy expences must be incurred in order to encourage them to emigrate and establish themselves. The same reflection arises on contemplating the charges against

Annsburgh Settlement

which has during this year involved an expence of \$876, which has but two settlers, who have been encouraged by having a house built for them and stock loaned to them. It appears nevertheless that they are but indifferent farmers, unacquainted with the objects which are to engage their attention. If on offering good land, in eligible situations and on low terms to settlers, a sufficient inducement does not arise to commence their improvements at their own expence, there can be but little expectation of an equivalent return for the heavy advances in cash that are made on such occasions. It is very seldom that an operation which is unnatural and forced succeeds to any considerable extent. We must follow, not lead in objects of this kind. However, I am glad to find that you are likely to receive some reimbursement for this advance.

Lumber Rents

I observe that you have not succeeded to the extent of your expectations, with respect to the recovery of the rents due from those you have permitted to cut timber on the lands, altho a considerable sum has been expended in law suits to compel them to do what is right. I am well persuaded of the advantages we shall derive from impressing these people with an idea of the interference of the law to protect our rights, and that in case of their attempts to violate them, they will be subjected to a considerable expence in their vindication, besides damages, to be recovered from them. With respect to the Machias depridators, they appear to be more hardened than any others, having for so long a period practised their frauds with impunity. I cannot determine at present the reasons which prevented the sale of No. 23, Eastern Division, as a part of the contract. I will examine the matter more minutely, and inform you of the result of my enquiries. From the local position of this township, I can plainly discover the pretext which is assumed to cover the depridations of the woods, which are situated higher up the stream.

Saw Mills

There seems to be no well founded expectation from your report, of

procuring a rent from this property, of any considerable value, altho the mills, and the lumber to supply them, are all furnished from our capital. However, you seem to entertain better hopes from the next year's experiment, which I flatter myself will succeed to a much greater extent.

Sundry Expences

This appears to be an account of various expenditures, which could not be placed under any specific head, a great part of which will be received back and credited, I suppose, under the next years accounts.

Packet

If your concern in this species of property has proved unproductive, or rather attended with considerable loss, it evidently results that it should no longer be continued. A very great difference will arise betwixt her present value, after the employment of several years, and her original cost, which is likewise to be charged to her account. The first motive which prompted an undertaking of this kind, was founded on the facility which would arise to the settlement of the country by furnishing a conveyance to those who were desirous of emigrating to our lands and bringing their families etc. with them. This inducement does not seem to be an affair of much consequence under existing circumstances, and as for benefiting by the freights, so as to render her navigation an object of profit, equivalent to the capital expended, and the risk the vessel is exposed to, I can see no chance of succeeding to such an extent. I therefore think it very prudent to dispose of the vessel whenever you can procure a good price—the sooner the better—and you will be the most competent judges whether it will be necessary to retain any vessel in your service and whether it will not be far more economical, to pay freight for the articles you want from Boston, especially as on the return of vessels which are usually empty, these freights must amount to a very small sum. You are very right in supposing that she “ought to have a profit carried ‘to her credit,’ beyond her expences.” Indeed, if she could have been called a profitable vessel, she ought to have cleared herself by this time, for what is called the wear and tear of a vessel diminishes her value very essentially. I do not find that any debit is made for insurance, so that the owners have sustained that risk, which in vessels accounts of disbursements is always charged to them.

Townships

This is a most important account, as relative to the interests and prospects of the proprietors, for to its credit is carried the amount of monies received, in order to counterballance the various expenditures which they

have disbursed, but there appears but little more credit than has been sufficient in amount to pay the taxes on the property.

Store

I do not, from the statement exhibited, concur in opinion with you that this establishment has "succeeded pretty well," for I do not find that it has produced any profit worth mentioning, certainly not sufficient for the risk and interest of money. Perhaps so many objects of attention divert the mind from the most essential pursuit, which is to induce settlers from the various districts of the New England States to come and fix themselves on our lands.

You are the most competent judges to decide whether this is the case. At any rate, you will concur with me in opinion that all other objects are trifling, when compared with that above alluded to.

With respect to the great outline of your plan, to open extensive roads, build mills, and form agricultural settlements at the same, there can be no doubt of the propriety of the system, whenever coincident circumstances have ripened our affairs sufficiently, to receive and pursue the same. But it appears to me that one settlement should be in a thriving and progressive state, before another is commenced, for if they are established at remote distances, and with a very confined population, discouragement will ensue, for it is not good for man to be alone, and the settlers would prefer less eligible soil and situation with a good neighbourhood around them, as a resource and protection.

I do not think with you that our expences will be the criterion to determine the extent of the government's demands for the settlement duties, but rather *the evident marks of such expence* as exhibited in the increased population, and rapid improvement of the country. I wish to know whether you think an application would be favorably received at present, as I am very desirous of obtaining the remaining deeds which are lodged in escrow.

I have taken the objects seperately, as they appeared in your letter, and have attached some comments to them, in succession.

I may perhaps not be well grounded in some of my remarks, as it is difficult to form a true estimate of a system of operations without visiting the scene for which they are intended.

The only data we possess, to guide our opinions at a distance, are derived from the result, producing immediate profit, or advantages, which must inevitably eventuate in it.

However, I shall always be disposed to give due weight to the motives

which have actuated you, and which I am confident have been founded on what you deemed the most pointed attention to our interests.

The accounts you have furnished shall be duly examined, and any remarks which may arise shall be communicated to you at the same time that I reply to your letter of a subsequent date, which I have just received.

I hope you have received Dr. Cony's answer relative to the superintendence of the Kennebec tract, which certainly requires the attention of some respectable and responsible person, on the spot, untill I can finally determine its fate, which I am most anxiously inclined to do as soon as possible.

Please to remember me affectionately to Mr. Richards and his cara sposa and with my best respects to your family, I am

Dear General

Yours etc.

WM. BINGHAM

General Cobb
Gouldsbrough

H. Jackson to Cobb, Boston, 18 April 1800 [CP]

Dear Friend: Boston April 18. 1800

I received your favor of the 3d of March by Mr. Lincoln.⁶ It was with great pleasure your friends were informed that you was yet alive, and so well employ'd in the distruction of beef, poultry, salt fish, etc. Go on my good friend in this feasting and dancing. You are certainly but just in your *prime of life* and you ought to enjoy yourself *while young*. Now is the time or never, for when you grow old and infirm you will have no relish for frolicking and. . . . But remember you must pay for all this, for "thy soul and body I will divide, thy body in the grave I'll hide, and thy dear soul in H— must ly, with d— to eternity." So much for you.

As it respects our friends affairs they stand pretty much as they did when you were here, except his having put a considerable amount of the demands against him to a distance of three or four years payment, and if any fortunate event should take place to increase the value of his lands, it is possible before the day of payment arrives he may be able to reduce his debts considerably. But I believe in no instance has that been effected

⁶ I believe this to have been the Mr. Lincoln mentioned in Cobb's fragmentary diary for 1797 in CP. In the entry for 8 January Cobb speaks of "Mr. Lincoln from Passamaquoddy." The census of 1790 lists several Lincolns as living in the area east of Machias but none in Passamaquoddy proper.

at present. By appointment, Colonel B. Hichborn⁷ and myself met him at Portland on the first of January last, where we pass'd a day or two together. He also came to Boston the last of February for two weeks. He came alone, but took his daughter Lucy⁸ home with him. She had been here on a visit for eight or ten week's. As to myself, you know my connection in his affairs, in which I must sink, or swim with him. I am closing all my own business and bringing every transaction to an adjustment, which I hope to accomplish very shortly. I ought *then* to have enough to make the remainder of my days comfortable and happy, and I assure you I really wish to be so situated to pass much or all of my time as we have frequently contemplated. The longer I live, the more I experience all is vanity of vanities.

As to politicks home and abroad I refer you to the publick papers, which I suppose you regularly receive. Shall only say I believe Mr. Strong will be chosen Governor by the people by a small majority and that his honor Mr. Gill will be no more before his election as Lt. Governor will be announced. I think I never enjoy'd more health than in the year past, and it will add much to my pleasure and gratification to see you here this spring or summer. I think a visit for a few weeks would do you much good both soul and body, and then I will learn you to live soberly and walk righteously. My best regards to Mr. Richards, and I wish him all the blessings and happiness of his new situation. My respects to your family and beleive me very sincerely your old friend

H. JACKSON

General D. Cobb
Gouldsbrough

Knox to Cobb, Thomaston, 24 April 1800 [CP]

Thomaston 24 April 1800.

My dear Cobb:

The opportunity afforded by Mr. Lincoln is too good for me to suffer it to pass, without asking you whether you are happy or not? The last time you wrote me a line, you said that you were not in good spirits. I hope Richards and his beautiful wife by their animation may have dissipated all your glooms. A practical as well as a scientific philosopher like you, with so fine a constitution, to be in bad spirits argues the indulgence of some bad habit. I do not mean that you indulge the general practice

⁷ Hichborn was an old friend who had served in Jackson's regiment during the Revolution. See above, p. 150, note 4.

⁸ Lucy Knox, later Mrs. Ebenezer Thatcher.

of getting tippe [?], but I am apprehensive you do not exercise sufficiently for the preservation of your health. At all events let me entreat that you cultivate your spirits as the first blessing and without which all others are insipid and naught. But why preach to you on this head who knows so well how to avoid this evil?

What think you of the democracy now? Bonaparte ought to receive the admiration of every body, for bringing this lawless monster to the guillotine. You must understand that I mean not to praise his patriotism, his republicanism, or any qualities which might enable him to shine in a town meeting. No. No. But he, a foreigner, a young man, holding his greatness only from himself to give law to 25 millions of people, to oblige them, by repeated sublimations of 10ths, to reduce their national list to 5,000,⁹ and those only to subserve to his will and power, argues greatness of mind and coincidence of circumstances. If assassination cuts him not off, he will make an effulgent campaign. You will observe how he praises our Washington, and yet all or almost all our papers abuse him. Where is the good? His government would not suit our soil or climate, but it may flourish in France. Will it not prove that every nation has as good a government as they deserve? Bonaparte is the soul of France, and France is the body which actuates and puts into motion 500 millions of souls, and those constituting the most enlightened half of all the people on the surface of our little globe. Write me, and if possible see me. No body loves you more than your

Affectionate friend

H. KNOX

General Cobb

*Elisha Coffin to Cobb, Columbia, 25 April 1800 [CP]*¹

Columbia April 25th 1800

General Cobb

Sir:

I would inform you that I cannot setel with Mr. Pattin² about the meddow as he will not setel with me in portion to what hay I cut as he doth with the rest that cut hay on the meddow. What is the reson I canot tell therefore I will come and setel with you, sir. As he told me that he should retårne my name to you I thought you would think that I did not

⁹ This apparently refers to Napoleon's conscription policy.

¹ This document is included as an example of the petty problems that General Cobb had to handle during his agency.

² This was Joseph Patten of Columbia, Cobb's subagent for that area.

intend to pay for the hay that I cut. But I am willing to pay what is right.
So i your servent

ELISHA COFFIN

H. Jackson to Cobb, Boston, 28 April 1800 [CP]

My dear David:

Boston April 28. 1800

I received your favor of the 12th instant by Captain Godfrey. I am delighted that you are in such good spirits, and that your chucky [?] piggs, ducks, turkeys, and sallads afford you such an agreeable prospect. But you say nothing of your fruit etc. These you have in such abundance its unnecessary to mention them.

You are too late for the cuttings of the green willows and the twiggss of Lombardy poplar. I have apply'd for them and Brattle had given away all he can spare this season. Mr. R. Hallowell was only able to procure a very few cuttings to send to Kennebeck.³

I had anticipated a visit from you in the packet, and I assure you I am much disappointed, and I cannot think what could hinder you unless it is that *curst disease* that has been hanging about you from your birth—*laziness*.

The affairs of our friend remain in nearly the same situation as when you was here. I see but very little alteration, and but few or no reasons to be pleased with the prospect. Time may do much in the rise of the property and this is the only and our best hope. The winter past has been pleasant and agreeable, our amusements, plays, balls, assemblies, etc. And as to myself, I think I never enjoyed more health than the last year.

I hope and pray you will make it convenient to visit us, on or about the 4th of July or commencement. I think such an excursion would do your heart and soul much good, and add much happiness to your declining days. Mr. Strong will be chosen Governor and Lt. Governor Gill will in a few days take his departure to the world of spirits. Remember me to Mr. Richards. My respects to Mrs. Cobb and your family. I suppose Captain Godfrey will take some late papers or I would enclose you some.

Your friend

H. JACKSON

³ Mr. Robert Hallowell, either senior or junior. The junior of that name did not add the name Gardiner until 1803. See R. H. Gardiner, *Early Recollections*, 4. For Thomas Brattle's horticultural achievements, see J. Winsor, *Memorial History of Boston*, IV. 628.

Benjamin Vaughan to Cobb, Hallowell, 30 April 1800 [CP]

Hallowell, April 30, 1800.

General Cobb.

Dear Sir:

I was favored in the course of the post with your letter, and should have answered it immediately, had I not waited for the departure of Mr. Wilde, who is the bearer of the present.

I am no less obliged than flattered by your intended design of contemplating our native productions here, with a view to their application to farming. Our ancestors of the old world had no other source for the plants they have amassed than that here described. It was in their power to improve these plants in countries analogous to those where they were found, but as the United States are on the East of a great continent placed in middle latitudes, their climate differs much from the regions of the West under similar latitudes and consequently, in the United States, many of these productions will naturally decline.

Since you did us the favor of a visit, some of the gentlemen in this vicinity have agreed to form a society, under the name of the Kennebec Agricultural Society.⁴ The name is descriptive from necessity, though we are far from wishing it to be exclusive. But if we made it more than co-extensive with the waters of the Kennebec, we should merit reproof for our presumption, since our neighbors may have (as we sincerely wish them to have) their societies. The localities of the case do not preclude our having honorary members, and among the first of these I hope to have your permission to name yourself.

Is the time not ripe for having an agricultural society upon your eastern coast? I do not speak of your Million of Acres, for you must first have to preside over agriculturalists, before you can preside at a board of agriculture. I think you can easily prevail upon your proprietaries to give a lot of land in favor of such an institution, as being calculated no less for their interest, than yours. It is our design, with regard to the Plymouth Company, to solicit a gift of 200 good acres, with liberty to sell the half of it perhaps; and we are so circumstanced, as not to be likely to plead in vain, being part of us proprietors.

Lumber is not high with us, though we have little yet sent down. We have sensibly felt the evils of the floods of June, as having swept away both mills and the materials for their work. The snows of the last winter

⁴ For a note on the Kennebec Agricultural Society, see *Maine: A Guide Down East* (WPA Writers' Project), 356.

however fell in a manner to favor an abundant collection of new materials, and most of our mills are repaired.

But I am not very favorable to the lumber trade, unless as a necessary evil. My passion is for agriculture, and I find the spirit rising among us. When the seas open, if that is an event soon to be hoped for, we shall find occupation enough with it. In the mean time, I am sorry that your little colony of farmers was not to be collected by Mr. Wingate or Mr. E. Prescott.⁵ The truth is, that the terms appeared too favorable to be solid. However we shall still not despair for you, and it will not be a great effort of liberality on our side to hand a few over to you, for we should scarcely miss half a dozen, if the tide keeps up its flow this way as heretofore.

I have the commands of the ladies to present to you their compliments. Mr. Merrick joins me in respects.

I have the honor to be, dear sir,

Yours sincerely,

BENJAMIN VAUGHAN

Bingham to Cobb, Philadelphia, 1 May 1800 [CP]

Dear General:

Philadelphia May 1st 1800

I have been waiting for the letter which you mentioned you should write to me the beginning of May, inclosing your private and loan account, in order that I might reply to your proposals on this subject at the same time that I answered your favor of the 26 March, but I must delay an answer to the other object, as I think it necessary immediately to attend to the contents of this letter.

I mentioned to you some time past, that I was desirous of your engaging some prudent, intelligent person, in whom confidence could be placed, to superintend the Kennebec tract, so far as to prevent any depredations being committed on it, and at the same time convey to me such information relative thereto as might enable me to turn this property to the best account. Under the present state of things the lands appear to be neglected. The more influence this person possessed, from personal weight of character, the better he would suit my purposes. At a future period, when a systematic arrangement should be formed for extending settlements and making improvements, a still more active and suitable character could be

⁵ Joseph Wingate of Hallowell had originally come from Amesbury, Massachusetts. E. Prescott was presumably a member of the family of Benjamin Prescott, who had settled in Hallowell shortly after the Revolution. See E. H. Nason, *Old Hallowell on the Kennebec*, 130-131, 38.

procured. It would be too burthensome a business for me to undertake, both with respect to financial and personal considerations, at the present moment. Have you any idea that these lands have grown into such repute, as to engage any large capitalists of Boston, Salem, or other places to the eastward, to make purchases of any large portion of them? However, at any rate, this agency must be procured.

I have considered the various opinions you express relative to the establishment of a lumber yard, and observe that the business would be so complicated, as essentially to interfere with more essential objects, as well as involve an immensity of time and attention, which might be more profitably employed. When I first suggested the idea, I expected that a considerable establishment of this nature could be formed at Gouldsbrough, and that from the resources of the neighbourhood, an extensive quantity of lumber could be procured, and that vessels from the different ports would be invited to come there, with an expectation of procuring full cargoes, on cheap terms.

But I find myself under a great mistake, and that the quantity you can supply is but trifling from Gouldsbrough District.

In the point of view which this business presents itself in, at present, from the data you have furnished, I think the less you meddle with the article, the better you will succeed.

It appears that you experience a great deal of fraud and chicanery in the management of the object, and the expences of navigating a vessel, which seems to have scarcely any other employment, are too great, at the present high rate of seamen's wages etc., to promise any advantage from dealing in such trifling objects.

If you were to establish what you call the great lumber yard, you must have an extensive agency, and place confidence in a great variety of characters, some of which might play the rogue and essentially injure the concern, and in a young country, the moral ties are not so strong as in older settlements where the prevalence of example and the force of the laws operate with more effect. The transmitting such articles from place to place, and the frequent removal of them, would be attended with very great loss as well as expence, and I do not think that any profit equivalent to the risk, labor, and employment of capital, could be expected to result from the operation.

But the most serious objection is the interference with our views of settlement and improvement, with which nothing should be permitted to enter into competition, in the smallest degree. This is the point, to which all our attention should be directed, and I am sorry to observe such little

progress made, notwithstanding all our expenditures and exertions.

When I take a view of the progress of other settlements, and the rapid increase of their population, with scarcely any advance of money to forward them, I begin to think that our attempts are premature, and that our country, however deserving a preference from its sea side situation and fertility of soil, cannot enjoy its advantages, from being so far removed from the hives from which the emigrants swarm.

This would be a very unwelcome intelligence to be impressed with at so late an hour, but I am fearfull there is some foundation for the remark, when we view the settlements in Maine more westwardly and contrast them with ours in point of increase of population and facility of fixing settlers, for from your returns it appears that you are in some instances compelled to offer the most alluring inducements to engage persons to establish themselves in districts of the land, which are very inviting from local situation and other advantages.

As the Kennebec tract is very ripe for settlement, I should be exceedingly pleased at commencing my operations there, and if I could dispose of the same proportion of the tract to the present concern, which I would be happy to do on easy terms, then one of our agents might reside on the Kennebec lands, and by a cooperation and good understanding might essentially benefit each other. I wish you to impart to me your opinion on this subject.

I should be happy to have General Knox's sentiments with respect to a plan of operation for Kennebec, but it is difficult to extract from him any ideas concerning these lands, and being so far distant from them, it is impossible for me to act, without information. His son was recently here, who, I was sorry to observe, was very dissipated.⁶

Whilst I was attending the legislature at Lancaster, he was nominated by the President a Lieutenant of the Navy, and from the interference of one of the Massachusetts delegation, was negatived. I felt much regret at not being present, as I am persuaded that I could have insured success to the vote, and I believe that the best mode of reforming him will be an employment in the naval service, in which his ambition should be somewhat gratified.

I observe that the half of the lands which had been deeded by General Jackson to Madame Leval, appear to be the property of La Roche. I expected they had been conveyed to Walker, and that from this source I should obtain payment for the advances made to Madame Leval, for which Walker became security.

⁶ This was Knox's eldest son, Henry Jackson Knox.

I concur in opinion with you that it would be proper to record the deeds as soon as I am in possession of them. The lands are all paid for, but you know that one half of the deeds are withheld, untill the settlement duties are liquidated. I wish this latter business could be arranged, in such a manner as to enable me to receive the deeds. What is your opinion of a relaxation of the legislature on the subject of this demand, if application was now made to them and our various expences and exertions properly appreciated? As I wish to have the deeds kept together, I will thank you to forward to me by some safe conveyance, those which I sent to you.

I shall reply immediately, as I receive it, to your letter, conveying your private and loan account, and will agree to your anticipating part of your next years salary. I most ardently wish that period to arrive, when these lands would be productive and give some return for the very heavy disbursements they have occasioned. The annual advances of money, independent of the loss of interest on the first purchase and expences, are very oppressive drawbacks.

I am with regard and esteem

Dear General

Your obedient humble servant

WM. BINGHAM

General Cobb
Gouldsborough

H. Jackson to Cobb, Boston, 27 May 1800 [CP]

My dear David:

Boston May 27. 1800

Your two letters by Captain Godfrey of the 18th instant are duly received. You may, young man, think to screen yourself under the poplar willows you plunder at Castine from the garden of some hospitable friend when on duty as foreman of the Grand Jury, yet you have much, very much to answer to your conscience (if you have any left) for the unwarrentable abuse given to two amiable, active, and industrious bachelors,⁷ who are disposed to render to man and women all the good in their power. Nothing but your own native indolence, total laziness, and inactivity can be the least apology for your unprovoked attack. Altho' you have been setting in judgment on the conduct of others, less hardened than yourself, remember for all thy sins and ingratitude you will one day be judged, and unless you immediately depart from evil and learn to do good, your case will be deplorable indeed.

⁷ Presumably Jackson and Hichborn.

A world of home news, as the saying is—Timothy is discharg'd, and so was McHenry,⁸ the army is disbanded, HK a representative—what think you of that—Lieutenant Governor Gill is dead and was buried on Saturday. Slim, very slim, procession indeed. Ward M. Boyleston is arrived here, after some of Moses's estate.⁹ Mr. C. Strong is Governour, and tomorrow is election day. Now for it, seat yourself down, take a little tobacco, put on your spectacles, and take up the inclos'd papers, and there you will find all the news, foreign and domestick—a treatise on the yellow fever, Brooks eulogy, the School for Libertines, an exhortation of repentance—the last enemy *is rum*—message with full powers to envoys—tracts of land for sale by HK—propriety of attending public worship—behold the rod of Aaron—rise up and come away—institution of the Boston Dispensary. To close the whole—THE NATIONAL BANKRUPT LAW and *The School for Scandal*. I hope you will take care how you call me lazy again.

Down to the earth *thy* body drops
Whence it was framed at first;
Forgets its former flattering hopes
And hastens to its dust.

I anticipate with much delight the pleasure of a visit from you on or about the 4th of July. I believe it will be much for your good, both soul and body, and I can assure you, it will be highly gratifying to your friends and none more so than old Henry. I observe what you say respecting your son Henry. Captain Talbot in the *Constitution* is expected to arrive here early in July. I will keep in mind your wish on that head.¹

We are all well and going on much after the old sort. As to myself I never enjoyed better health in my life. I am very regular, but very little in society. Indeed its disagreeable to me. I am making up my accounts and preparing for the end of all things. My regards to Mr. Richards.

Yours as ever and ever

H. JACKSON

General D. Cobb
Gouldsborough

⁸ Both Secretary of State Timothy Pickering and Secretary of War McHenry were dismissed when Adams reorganized his cabinet.

⁹ Ward Boylston was the nephew and heir of Moses Gill, then Lt. Governor of the Commonwealth. See R. H. Gardiner, *Early Recollections*, 10.

¹ This was Henry Jackson Cobb, who was a midshipman aboard the U.S.S. *Constitution*.

*Bingham to Cobb, Philadelphia, 5 June 1800 [CP]*²

Philadelphia June 5th 1800

Dear General:

I have to acknowledge receipt of your letter of the 28 April, which has been detained for a considerable time on the road. I am happy to find that Mr. Merrick's plan of settlement meets your approbation. It appears evidently that he possesses a perfect and practical knowledge of the business and is much attached to that essential object in all such undertakings, œconomy.

His plan is certainly formed on proper principles and will require but comparatively small disbursements of money. I had determined to make no attempt at a regular progressive system of improvement, untill I had disposed of a considerable part of this property, as I was intimidated by the expence. But Mr. Merrick's calculations are so much within bounds, that I am almost tempted to commence my operations, from a conviction of the advantages the lands will derive from being placed in a train of settlement which will probably enable me to procure much better terms in the sale. In this instance, the business would be natural and not forced, as in the case of the lower tract, where expences have been exceedingly great, considering the result.

In carrying this object into effect, I think it would be proper for the reasons you have alledged, to employ Dr. Cony, but I wish to know in what capacity he would be engaged and on what terms, so as to answer the purposes intended. What offer shall I make Mr. Merrick, or can you sound him on the subject and let me know the result?

I have some remote idea of making a proposal to the same parties who are interested in the lower tract, to take a concern in the Kennebec lands, in which case, it is possible that Mr. Richards might superintend the settlements, as, considering the little progress that our Penobscot lands are likely to make with respect to settlement, the exertions of two persons can scarcely be deemed necessary for superintendence. But, on the other side, the parties have probably been so disappointed in their expectations, that they would not be easily induced to make an additional purchase, and, besides, the Kennebec lands were held some time since in disrepute, altho they are beginning to recover their character. However, these ideas are only in embryo, and I do not wish any hint to be given on the subject, to Mr. Richards.

After Shaw had induced General Jackson to employ him in making

² There is a photostatic copy of this letter in William Bingham Letters, 1795-1803, 45-48, at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

purchases at Gouldsborough, he went there and bought the property of Daniel Wright, Benjamin Allen, and Peter Godfrey,³ each containing 100 acres, for two of which he paid £300 each and for the latter £210, which I consider as a most enormous price, and I wish your opinion on the subject, as I cannot conceive that such a price as \$10 per acre could have been paid. If it has been paid, I wish to know what price could be procured for the same property at the present moment. But what is more particularly desirable is to know what could have induced Shaw in the deed which conveyed this property to insert the sum of \$1,000 as the consideration money received therefor, whereas the amount paid him for the property, including a compensation for his services and interest on the original sums is \$2,978.52. This contrariety betwixt the deed and the account places this business in an awkward position, as one half is to be charged to Messrs. Hope and Co., and the acknowledgment of the money having been paid should have appeared in the deed, whereas not more than one third of the amount of the purchase money is to be found there.

I was sorry to hear that you had been so violently attacked by the gout, as to prevent your having the free use of your hands, but I hope you have recovered, and that you will be able to resume your pen without any inconvenience, for I am very anxious to be made acquainted by regular communications with the success or failure of the various objects that occupy your attention, as attached to the business of settlement and improvement.

You have omitted returning to me the deeds which I sent to you. I hope you have had them recorded. Mr. Baring thinks \$60 for the expence of recording his deeds, extravagantly high.

I am with sincere regard

Dear General

Your obedient humble servant

WM. BINGHAM

General Cobb
Gouldsborough

*Cobb to Bingham, Gouldsborough, 9 June 1800 [BP]*⁴

To William Bingham, Esquire
Dear Sir:

Gouldsborough June 9th. 1800

Inclosed I have forwarded my private and loan accounts for the last year.

³ These were old settlers in Gouldsborough. The census of 1790 lists a Benjamin Alline, a Benjamin, though no Peter, Godfrey and Daniel Wright.

⁴ There is an almost identical copy of this letter in CP.

I have now before me your two last letters of April 10th. and May 1st. As Mr. Richards will in a few days go from this place on a tour to Philadelphia, I must refer you to him for a general conversation on the subjects contain'd in those letters. I cannot however omit to remark that the observations there contain'd, and the spirit with which they are dictated, would be sufficient to damp the ardor of the most faithfull servant, in the persuit of the interests of his principal. I would further observe that I know of no important settlement of any large tract of country, belonging to one or two individuals, that has ever been bro't into a state of flourishing improvement, without the expenditure of much larger sums than has ever been contemplated in the improvements of this country, and I cannot conceive that you can be "seriously impressed with the very unwelcome intelligence at this *late hour*, that this country was remote from the tide of emigration," when I have constantly informed you for three or four years past, that that was the situation of the country. And you may perhaps recollect that one of the last questions I propos'd when I was last at Philadelphia was that, as this country was distant from the current of emigration, whether we should wait for that current or force the settlement? The answer was force it, and indeed your instructions to us are fill'd with directions for this purpose.

Mr. Richards will take on your deeds, and my draft for one thousand dollars which I hope you will honor.

I have not receiv'd Dr. Cony's account for his last years service, altho I presume it is long since paid by Mr. Wilde of Hallowell, whom I directed to do it the last winter. I shall wait your answer to my letter of 28th. April before I make any engagements at the Kennebeck.

As it is necessary for me, after a five years residence, to have some of the lands which I am entitled to by contract in fee, I have requested Mr. Richards to obtain yours and Mr. Baring permission for a deed of the Shaw farm on which I now live, taking therefrom the store and wharf. I am entitled to a lot on this harbour, and the other part of the farm I wish to have consider'd as a part of the land I am to receive. The house, a small one, which has been repair'd and an addition put to it, I am willing to make such allowance for as shall be considered equitable. Mr. Richards on his return can execute whatever you determine, in the same manner we were directed to do with any other lands that I should want.

I am dear sir, with esteem

Your most obedient servant

DAVID COBB

Richards to Cobb, Boston, 19 June 1800 [CP]

Dear General:

Boston the 19th. June

We arrived here safe yesterday afternoon after a very tedious passage, not having put into any port between Gouldsborough and this, and in consequence of continued N.W. winds being driven rather to the southward so that the first land we made was the southern point of Cape Cod. We had however fine and calm weather so that the sickness to be complained of was less than the confinements. I have seen Miss Debby safe at Barney Smith's.⁵

Tomorrow morning I proceed to Philadelphia—am therefore in somewhat a greater hurry than I left Gouldsboro', enough God knows for my weak pericranium. Today I have dined with Jeffrey who appears as rosy, healthy, sick, and grumbling, as usual. General Jackson is out of town, Eustis poorly with a complaint in his eyes. Our other friends as great blackguards as ever. Every thing looks at least 3 weeks or a month forwarder than with us—green peas out of date, cucumbers the same, strawberries, cherries and melons in perfution.

To what few commissions I have left with me, I shall pay due attention, and shall direct Godfrey accordingly. John Codman is gone to Europe with our friend Gore whose stay here was very short. We therefore have to transmit business with his brother Stephen, as I suppose you know by a circular letter which Cazeneuve tells me he sent to us. I have been conversing with Andrews this morning about the price of vessels and the propriety of sending a vessel to the West Indies. From him I learn that vessels look up well and he says that our packet if two years old would readily bring \$3,500; if 4 years old, \$3,200. He tells me sloops are proportionately cheaper, from 50 to 70 tons not being in such demand for foreign voyages. Godfrey says they think of parting with the *Ruby* and expect about \$1,500—less perhaps would tempt them. Do turn these hints in your head and write me fully if you have more time than I have per return of packet. When I return from Philadelphia I mean to purchase, but I think, from what intelligence I can collect, a vessel of \$2,500 will serve my turn better than a dearer one. David Godfrey will take about \$360, which ought to be placed to my credit in store but had [better?] remain unaccounted for till my return. I find we have only \$155 in Codman's hands. I send this cash on my account as the carpenters told me on the morn of my departure they should soon want money. I wish you to

⁵ A Boston friend who at this time resided at the old residence of Governor Hutchinson in Milton. See J. Winsor, *Memorial History of Boston*, IV. 610, note 3.

think of the road through No. 7, and of clearing out our centre road by contract. Also to tell Black to provide refuse boards for my garden. Stephen Codman wishes to have the refusal of the next boards if they are very good. I like not such friendly offers, but leave him to you and Godfrey. Adieu. My best regards to all and believe me yours truly

JOHN RICHARDS

*Bingham to Cobb, Philadelphia, 26 June 1800 [CP]*⁶

Dear General:

Philadelphia June 26th 1800

I have had the pleasure of seeing Mr. Richards, whose visit to his friends was highly agreeable. He delivered me your letter of the 9th instant, in which you complain of "damping your ardor" by the impressions made by the perusal of my letters of the 10th April and 2 May. You certainly have very essentially misconceived my intentions, if you could suppose I meant my communications to have such a tendency, or in the smallest degree to wound your feelings. Such could neither be my interest nor inclination, nor can I conceive why you should infer my remarks to be "dictated by a spirit" of so unfriendly and inauspicious a nature.

My personal interests being so deeply involved in the result of your operations, it was natural for me to reply to your observations relative to your progress in improvements and settlements, in a full and explicit manner. In reviewing what I wrote, I do not see a sentence that I regret, for the language is calm and temperate, and I gave my remarks more freely, from a persuasion, that, if at this distance from the scene of action, I should labor under mistakes, which was very natural, you would correct my opinions in your reply. I certainly was under no injunction from a sense of propriety or delicacy to withhold my sentiments. As for the latter sentiment, it could not enter into the calculation, as my motives were pure, and not malevolent. As an evidence of this I quote a letter I wrote to General Knox about the same time (May 15) in which I mention "I am well persuaded that our agents have concerted the best plans and have faithfully devoted their services for carrying them into execution, but the insuperable difficulty of situation is not easily removed or counterbalanced."

With respect to that part of your letter wherein you express that you cannot conceive that I "can be seriously impressed with the very unwelcome intelligence at this *late hour*, that the country was remote from the

⁶ There is a photostatic copy of this letter in William Bingham Letters, 1795-1803, 52-63, at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

tide of emigration," for that you had constantly informed me of this being the situation of the country, for three or four years past.

You certainly are not correct on this point. It was well known at all times, that the population lay westwards and that our tract was remote from the best peopled districts. But it was supposed that the water navigation would facilitate their emigration, which was the prevailing motive to establish the packet and that the encouragement we should hold out would be an additional incentive.

These were my ideas, founded on the language of your letters, which perhaps have escaped your recollection.

In yours of January 30, 1797, you mention that "if cutting of roads and building houses of entertainment on them are pursued," you pledge yourself "there will not be wanting settlers or speculators to purchase the lands." You appropriate eight thousand dollars to both objects as sufficient, and this sum to be expended in the course of two or three years, during which period it is certain "that the income from mills etc. etc. etc. will far exceed the disbursements, that this or any other operation can call for."

In yours of February 10, 1797, you mention that if I have "not systematized my operations," to send you *charte blanche*, and appropriate a capital of ten thousand dollars for various purposes, and that your present opinion is that you will never have occasion for further advances, but what will be created out of the operations here, and supplies besides that will be annually increasing to a great amount.

It is needless to enumerate other parts of your letters confirmatory of the same sentiments, which naturally made a corresponding impression upon my mind. If the result has proved a disappointment to your expectations, it is not surprising that I should express the circumstance to be of an unwelcome nature.

I know that without a certain degree of enthusiasm, in all such operations, there can be no eventual success, and that under such a state of mind we are induced to be too confident, and that extreme confidence will lead us into mistakes which must be corrected, as soon as they happen.

If our expenditures are greater than the advantages we derive from them will counterbalance, it is the part of prudence to correct them, by diminishing their amount. If the position of Mr. Richards in one of his letters is just, that we must wait for the lands westward of the Penobscot filling up before ours can be in demand, it is the particular object to claim our attention, to economize our funds, but at the same time to place the property in a progressive state of improvement, so as to attract settlers

whenever they may be disposed to make their appearance. Another object will be to impress the legislature so favorably with respect to our exertions and expenditures, as well as evident marks of improvement, as to induce them to relinquish their claim to the settlement duties, which are very oppressive, and ought as soon as possible, to be liquidated, by a discharge from the State.

It will be recollected that you have been compelled to procure your labourers from Kennebec, as they are not to be obtained in the country, which is a serious difficulty, of so discouraging a nature, that in your letter of July 2, 1797, you mention that "the price of labor is still too high for to venture on any important operations in our country, either by contract or otherwise." Such considerations would of course have their weight in any system which I might form with respect to expenditures, especially when connected with the results which would probably take place. Such sentiments seem to have pervaded the mind of Sir Francis Baring who in a recent letter says "with regard to our joint concern we must continue with moderate improvement and wait for more favorable times which may arise, if peace shall appear." He further says that the conduct of "the agents of Sir William Pultney has been one of the prominent causes which have thrown a general discredit on speculations in land," for their expenditures have been immense and no receipts.

With respect to myself, I must confess that I should very much dislike making heavy advances without being well persuaded of a speedy return, and I am confident that you would have great reluctance in advising such a measure, as you are acquainted with the immense sum already disbursed on this property. I am well persuaded that, if we carry our views to a period somewhat more remote, the Penobscot tract will be of vastly greater value than the Kennebec, but at the present moment I am equally convinced that the latter may be rendered more available, from its local position, as relative to settlers. This occasions an uncommon anxiety on my part to commence my operations there, altho the first exertions would be on a small scale, such as the selection of a few townships, which could have their lines run out, and divided into small farm lots, suitable to the wants of the farmers, who might emigrate into this country. Altho Dr. Cony does not appear to be well calculated for extensive scenes of operation, where a great deal of intelligence and activity are to be combined, yet for this inferior class of the business, he would answer perhaps better than a more accomplished character. Nor do I suppose that his pretensions in his own estimation can extend beyond the first stages of the system, which I think should be the selection of some townships for settlement

and having them surveyed and prepared for emigrants. The more detailed parts of the plan, as relative to price, terms of payment and a variety of other objects connected therewith, could be the subject of future communications. I therefore shall thank you to take such measures as will be necessary to engage Dr. Cony's services, as far as my views extend, and to stipulate such terms with him, as considering all circumstances, you may deem just and proper.

Should Mr. Merrick's talents for such operations be of a superior kind, and that by his experience and intelligence, he can become very useful to the system, when extended on a larger scale, I certainly would not wish to forego them, as it is economy in such business to procure the employment of the best abilities, altho they may be attended with apparently greater expence. You will be the best judge, how these points can be best arranged, so as not to lose sight of either.

I am well persuaded that our sale of these lands will be very much effected by the improvements and settlements, of which they will appear to be immediately susceptible, and therefore the sooner I commence my operations, the nearer I shall arrive at the point I have in view and it is a very important one, as you will readily conceive how distressing to my finances must be the advance of such an immense sum of money as has been disbursed for the payment of these lands.

Mr. Richards, in several conversations I have held with him, fully confirms the idea of the difficulty of procuring emigrants into our territory. I am well persuaded that the difficulties are daily removing, and from your joint exertions they will at last be effectually surmounted. I find the civilization of the inhabitants is making a rapid progress, altho I much doubt, considering their inveterate habits, that they can be fully reformed, and whilst from their idleness and dissipation, they present such an appearance of wretchedness, such misery is attributed to the poverty of the country and not to its true cause. Hence it becomes necessary, by the encouragement of agricultural settlements, to exhibit the country in its true point of view. And untill settlers can be procured from the other parts of the Union, I think it would be advisable to push forward by facilities of various kinds, those which are already established, at Epping⁷ and elsewhere in the neighbourhood. This may be done by instruction and advice, by procuring the best quality of seeds, and the most approved farming utensils. It would not be amiss to engage one of the merchants at Boston or Salem to send for some Siberian wheat, by one of their vessels

⁷ There is a section of present-day Columbia, then No. 12, which is called Epping. Cobb had attempted to start a settlement there.

to Petersburg, which coming from a high latitude, would best suit our meridian. This seed could be dispersed amongst the farmers, and a few bushels would cost but a trifle. If you were to write to a dozen merchants on the subject, and but one was to execute your order, it would be of advantage, by making an impression upon the minds of these men, with respect to your views of agricultural improvement, and such impressions have an amazing effect in bringing a country into notice. I have watched the progress of the Genesee, as well as other recent settlements and I have found them uniformly get into credit by puffing—by spreading far and near an account of their advantages, so that the public mind may be familiarized to a knowledge of them, so that the country may no longer appear a terra incognita. By extracts of letters wrote to and from various places, by well timed paragraphs in the public prints, and a variety of other modes which his ingenuity suggested, Williamson soon attracted the public attention to the Genesee Lands.

The city of Washington was puffed into notice in the same way, and even the lands within the British lines in upper Canada are receiving the advantages of this resource, and hundreds of our families in the interior counties of this state, are removing into that country, which I believe to the northward of your lands.

There can be no delusion practised in our case, for those who emigrate will be far more than overpaid for the preference they give our lands.

I find an immense increase of population is taking place in the Kennebec country. Altho we are not actually benifited by this circumstance at the present moment, yet we shall eventually derive great advantages therefrom as the tide of population will continue its course untill it arrives at our settlements.

Mr. Richards mentions your intention of establishing a mill on the Union River, which I think will be attended with great advantages, not only on account of profit, but from arresting the progress of the log cutters.

Do you not think that your knowledge of the inhabitants of Massachusetts might be turned to great account, by a journey into the interior of that State, and endeavoring to impress them favorably with respect to our country?

Such a journey might personally be of great service to you, as exercise would dissipate your erratic gout.

If once we could procure a few settlements of respectable farmers, they would soon increase considerably, and no settlers could have greater en-

couragement than they would receive, by the prices they would procure for their produce, and which would continue, untill they raised more than would satisfy the wants of the inhabitants of the District.

If such an excursion should meet your views, you will have an opportunity of seeing Mr. Merrick and Dr. Cony on your route, and conversing with them on the subject.

I recommended to Mr. Richards to send the packet here with a cargo of various kinds of lumber, which I think would sell to great profit and in return she might carry back Indian corn, rye and whiskey. I think you might introduce this latter article into the consumption of the country which would be far more æconomical for the people and be far more profitable to your store than West India rum. It is made of the same materials, and is very little inferior to the gin of Europe.

I have accepted and paid your draft on me for \$1,000, which is charged to your account.

With respect to the farm in Gouldsborough which you wish to receive as part of the lands which you are entitled to in fee simple, I have spoke to Mr. Baring, and we are both of opinion that according to the construction of the agreement, such lands were not contemplated, for it is mentioned that they should be of an average quality in point of value, whereas this farm cost upwards of \$10 per acre which at such rate would render this part of the compensation higher than either of us contemplated. I am of opinion that I was exceedingly imposed upon in this cursed purchase made from Shaw. We will think more seriously on the subject and make known to you our ultimate intentions.

I wish you to reply to some of the most important subjects of my communications as early as will suit your convenience.

We must not be discouraged by our first efforts not proving so successful as we expected. The soil and situation are excellent, and the country must engage the attention of the farming interests. The principal object is to obtain some good settlers in the interior, who will be removed from the vicious habits and bad example of the lumbermen. Others would follow, and the lands from their essential advantages would soon grow into repute.

I am very anxious to have matters placed in such a train as to procure from the legislature the remission of the settlement duties, which amount to nearly forty thousand dollars. When do you suppose an application may be made for this purpose?

I will forward to you a note of the kinds of lumber that will suit this market and you will then determine whether it will be proper to dispatch

the packet. However, this should not interfere with her sale if you should find a good opportunity of substituting a smaller vessel in her place.

With sincere regard and esteem, I am

Dear General

Your obedient humble servant

WM. BINGHAM

General Cobb

Ross to Cobb, Union River, 1 July 1800 [CP]

Dear Sir:

Union River July 1st. 1800

I sent over to day for the dimensions of the mill work you wanted from Mr. Fabrique, but not being at home have not yet got them. The mail having arrived now and on the eve of departure, being twelve hours sooner than usual, prevents my sending it you this post.

I find my cheese hoops are too small for your use. The infernal owls have destroyed eighteen turkies for me a few nights since. I mean to warn them out of town to morrow, when they will probably visit Goldsborough. My most respectful compliments attend Mrs. Cobb and your good family,

And am with much respect and esteem

Dear sir your most obedient servant

DONALD ROSS

Honorable David Cobb, Esquire
Goldsborough

Ross to Cobb, Union River, 15 July 1800 [CP]

Dear Sir:

Union River 15 July 1800

I have the honor to acknowledge receipt of your esteemed favor of the ninth instant. Tho' you have no owls at Goldsborough, 'tis not for the reason you mention, but yet a very obvious one. You have no groves of shady oaks or pleasant maples where they can retire to, and tho' your flocks of turks and ducklings are, to be sure, alluring yet will not these marauders invade them without a secure retreat, so that you have to thank your Goldsborough goths that have destroyed your forests for the protection your naked hedges afford the little turks.

Fabrique, poor fellow, has had to taste of the cup of affliction. His wife is deposited in the silent tomb, her young one has since followed. But

hitherto he has behaved like a man and philosopher on the occasion. I waited on him yesterday to urge your request about the mill irons, which he has furnished me with and which you have here with.

Am sorry that you seem so indifferent about your visit to Union River. I have so much faith in your doctrines and tenets that I should anticipate more real good to the temporal interests of our folks here, from three or four of your lectures on agriculture, economy and industry, than I should to their spiritual concerns from six months preaching of the most orthodox Methodist that comes amongst us. And yet to speak candidly, I have a much better opinion of them than formerly. Whatever their motives may be, they certainly cannot be ascribed to avaritious or mercenary views. Their pittance is small, their living amongst the poorest of their hearers, their manners are simple, they are humble and meek in their deportment, and to speak without prejudice, I have much pleasure in observing a radical reform progressing in the morals of the people. They are more temperate, more circumspect in their behavior, more conscientious in their transactions with each other, have more of the fear of God and the magistrate, and begin to have the dawn of industry breaking upon them.

You may infer probably from my preaching that am one of their converts or perhaps had a fit of the nightmare. But neither. My heart has yet too much of the adamant tho' I often wish it susceptible [*sic*] of the raptures these people some times say they experience. From all I've said you will no doubt feel the necessity of paying us a visit soon. At least let us blend some of your precepts with those of religion. They will be ornaments to each other and I hope to see them much courted and sought after.

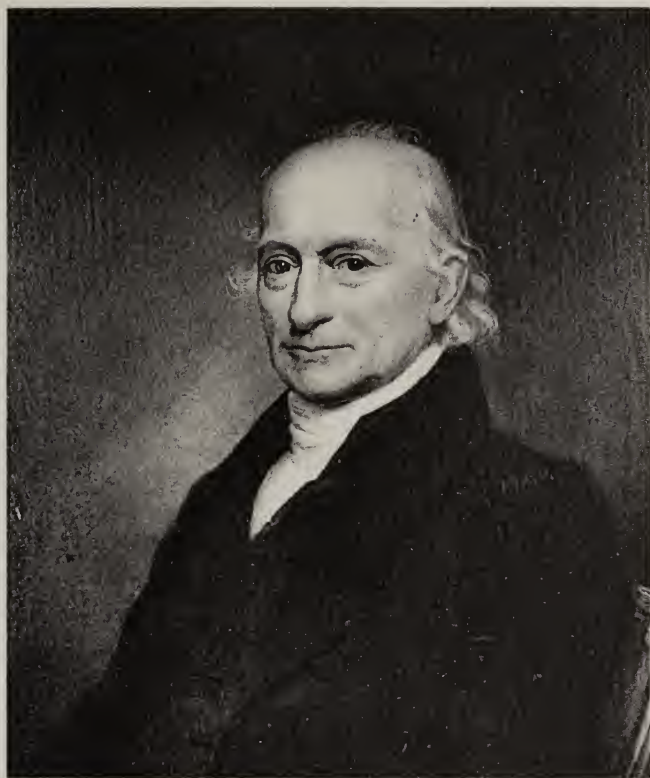
Herewith I have sent you a statement of what I have received from the loggers, etc., on your account. The prospect of obtaining any more at present is very doubtful. The mills here have done sawing for sometime, but as the men indebted in general evince a disposition to pay and fulfil their agreements, I have little doubt but the whole may be collected this fall if the season is favorable. But the poor devils can no more make boards without water than the Israelites could bricks without straw. I have advertized the meadows and have a prospect of getting as many hayes as last year, the amount of which you'll see in the Account Current sent you from hence last April. My best wishes always attend you and family and believe me to be with much respect and esteem

Dear sir

Your most obedient servant

DONALD ROSS

Honorable David Cobb, Esquire
Goldsborough



Charles Vaughan of Hallowell
Enterprising Promoter of the Kennebec Country
Portrait by an unknown artist



1800

1061

H. Jackson to Bingham, Boston, 16 July 1800 [BP]

Boston July 16th. 1800

Sir:

Your letter of the 2d instant by Mr. Richards was duly received. Although you appear'd to hesitate respecting Mr. Tudor's demand,⁸ yet I was led to hope that before the presentment of the bills, some circumstance on the subject would have occurred to your recollection to induce you to honor them. But to my great disappointment, I am notified their having been noted for non acceptance. This information, sir, is unpleasant and chagrining, and is a wound to my reputation and feelings that I am unaccustomed too. However on a further reflection, I yet persuade myself you will not permit my drafts to return upon me, but in honor and justice take them up at maturity. I will call to your remembrance a conversation that you, General Knox, and myself, had at your brakefast table in your library. General Knox observed that I wish'd some evidence from you in writing to indemnify me against the payment of Mr. Tudor's note. You reply'd you had no objections whatever, but as Tudor had said he never would take a shilling if it came out of my pocket, you thought it was best to let it lay without any indemnification, as in that case, I might be able with more confidence to put Tudor of, and that I might depend on your honor to bare me harmless. This virbal engagement *from you* was sufficient, and I have continued to beat him of to the last moment. Nothing would satisfy him or prevent a suit but full payment of the note with interest, and this I was unable to do at this time without the assistance of a friend. I am happy that General Knox is just arrived, to whom I refer you for further information respecting this transaction. I therefore continue to flatter myself from your known candour and justice, that you will without any further hesitation honor the bills, that I may be reimbursed the sum I have paid on your account. This is incumbant on you by the most sacred tye that binds man to man. If you should permit them to return, it will extreemly distress and embarrass me at this moment. It cannot be that you will allow them to come back.

I am with sentiments
of regard and friendship
dear sir your humble servant
H. JACKSON

Honorable William Bingham, Esquire
Philadelphia

⁸ For the story of the Tudor note, see above, pp. 59-61. There is a lengthy opinion from the pen of James Sullivan on this subject in KP, xli. 57, dated December, 1797, which attempts to show how payment of the Tudor note may be avoided.

*Charles Vaughan to Bingham, Boston, 23 July 1800 [CP]*⁹

Honorable William Bingham
Philadelphia
Sir:

Boston July 23d. 1800

The Million of Acres that you own on the Kennebec River has had as yet but little of your attention and none of your funds to appreciate its value.

Its remote situation, and the vast tracts of country that were unsettled, between your tract and the incorporated towns on the Kennebeck, was a bar to any profitable expenditures, till the actual settlement of these intermediate tracts and the general reputation of the country was established. I am happy in the opportunity of informing you that the settlement of the country adjoining your tract to the south, has progressed beyond the expectation of the most sanguine; and the moment has arrived when the advance of a small sum (without waiting a general plan of improvement and expenditure) will essentially promote the value of your property. The quality of lands, command of water for the common objects on a farm, are little valued where there is no communication with navigable waters. You have a communication with Hallowell; but from the direction of the road, and the nature of the country, it is not a straight line. The Penobscot River is (*now*) from the high price of grain, and provisions, the market for your lands, and the lands in its neighbourhood, and it will always be the most natural market because the road is capable of being better with less expense, and the distance is not so great to Bangor, the head of navigation on Penobscot, as it is to the Hook, the head of navigation on the Kennebec. A road to the former once made will prove these facts, and will bring your lands more into view than any road or expenditure within your tract. This road is not only begun, but is chiefly made, and if your assistance is given, I will this fall or at furthest next spring have the communication open, from the line of your Million to Bangor. The direction of this road I give you with a minute of what is yet to be provided for. The whole distance to your S.E. corner is 40 miles,¹ to the Karatunk settlement not more than 64. Beginning at the head of navigation at Bangor, the road runs about a N.W. course on the east side of the Kenduskeg about 21 miles. This road is made and a good road for carts,

⁹ There is a photostatic copy of this letter in William Bingham Letters, 1795-1803, 64-69, at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

¹ The comma is inserted to make evident what I believe to be the correct reading of this sentence.

except about 2 miles at the last, and passes through many settlements. From this the road is laid out and will run westerly tending a little to the north about 5 miles, to the west line of No. 3 on the 5th range. This is not provided for. From thence the road is laid out a due west course for 19 miles, through Nos. 4 and 5 and Hallowell Academy Township *with no other deviation from a straight line* than for about 2 miles, to accomodate a situation for the bridge over the Sabastacook at a sett of falls, the waters for some miles above being deep and called "Still Waters" from there being little current. Of this 19 miles, 12 are not only provided for but actually made. From the west line of the Academy Township, the road passes west, a little northerly, thro' Copstown and continues in that direction about 6 miles. This road is cut but not fit for carts. It is however constantly travelled with horses. From this it will take a northerly direction towards your line and may strike it perhaps in 3 or 4 miles. The latter road in this direction is to be made. Thus the whole distance from Bangor to your tract as the road runs is 54 miles, but from your S.E. corner, 3 miles of road southerly will open the communication with this road, 38 miles from Bangor.² Thus:

	Roads made and provided for	Unprovided for
From Bangor to the Kenduskeg	19	2
Thro' No. 3, 5th Range		5
4, made by me	6	
5		7
Hallowell Academy Township,		
made by me	6	
Copstown	6	
Further west		3
	<hr/> 37	<hr/> 17

Twelve miles of this road I made and it is fit for carts. The expense of this 17 miles, and to build the bridge over the Sebastacook, which will cost 200 dollars, will be about 700 dollars, and about as much more will be sufficient, with such help as I can get among the settlers, to add another rod [*sic*]. I have a contribution of about 200 dollars, and I propose the expenditure of the funds as follows: first to compleat the communication between your S.E. corner and the termination of the 19 miles on the Ken-

² The route of Vaughan's road would go roughly from Bangor along the Kenduskeag to Garland and then west through Dexter, Harmony, Athens, and Solon to the Kennebec.

uskeg, then to make a bridge over the Sebasiticook, and then apply as far as funds will go to the opening the road at your south line, thro' the last 3 miles, and making good such spots as need it. From yourself I ask 500. dollars. I have contributed 300. who had but a small interest in the lands. The money and expenditure you may place in such hands as you see fit. I shall be on the spot very soon, to expend what I have collected (which I shall by consent put on the bridge, if I have no further aid), and if you have no special agent to act for you, I shall cheerfully attend to the expenditure of yours, with the other contributions that will pass through my hands and make such a road as will most effectually produce the end intended, and without any charge of my time. I should observe the bridge to be built over the Sabastacook waters, which runs through the lands to the southward and eastward of your S.E. corner, is carried as far north as the ground and water will admit, as the stream for miles to the north is deep and wide. In addition to the above road, another is making which will give a value to your property, and for which no contribution is asked. The Piscataqua rises in your Million, and in spring and fall the use of it will be important and frequent to your settlers. The road making is from Piscataqua River to the 19 miles of road east of Kenduskeg, and it will leave the Piscataqua on the line between Nos. 2 and 3 in the 6th range of townships, and continue a due south course till it strikes the above road. At this point by means of this road a market will be established, and if your settlers prefer the Bangor market, they will save full 40 miles in going this road, which they must go if they continue by water. I am the more anxious to compleat this road, this fall, because another road is cut more south (running around the northerly part of Moose Pond)³ which however from the quality of the land and the probability of want of funds for a bridge, will leave a decided advantage (if the travelling is secured this season) to the upper road. You will perhaps in no other part of America find an equal extent of road made in a straight line and at so small an expense.

I am sir with respect
Your humble servant
CHARLES VAUGHAN

Copy⁴

³ The present Great Moose Lake in the town of Hartland.

⁴ This letter is in the same hand, probably that of a clerk's, as that of John Merrick to Bingham, Hallowell, 13 October 1799. See above, pp. 983-991.

1800

1065

Knox to Bingham, Boston, 3 August 1800 [BP]

Boston August 3 1800

My dear Sir:

I have only time to make a short reply to your favor of the 26th of July, being on the point of departure for St. Georges.

It is to be regretted that time has shed its misty influence in any degree on the transaction between General Jackson and Mr. Tudor.

The facts are according to my recollection: that while General Jackson in 92 was negotiating the 2d contract with the Committee, expecting to obtain the lands for ten cents, Tudor stepped in on the part of Mr. Soderstrom, agent for Mr. McComb of New York, and raised the price to 21 cents, and would have continued his offers had not a compromise took place between General Jackson and him by the former giving his note for one thousand guineas payable in one year. This conduct was approved by General Jackson's employers.

That when you assumed the 1st contract in December 92, and visited Boston, you found it expedient also to assume the 2d in fact and substance if not in form by paying 5,000 dollars thereon. You afterwards paid Flint, or gave your obligation to that end, for 2,500 dollars expressly for his relinquishing to you half of the 2d contract, and you also I believe obtained Duers relinquishment of one moiety thereof, Flint having acted as his agent. And further you offered General Jackson the same sum you gave Flint or a proportion of the profits at his option.

That you also formed a contract for a sale of a part of these lands embraced by the 2d contract with Mr. Baring, which was not executed owing to the circumstance of the surveys embracing a greater quantity than one million contemplated by the contract.

That the circumstance of the note to Tudor was always brought to view both by General Jackson and myself, as obligatory on the purchasers and not on the agents, not however to be paid if it could be avoided. The circumstance of General Jacksons solicitation, in your library in 1795 (not 97) to obtain indemnification, was postponed solely on account of Tudor's declaration "that if the amount was either to come from General Jackson or myself he would not insist on the payment." Tudor went to Europe in 97 and left this note with Mr. Quincy⁵ who continually threatened General Jackson with a suit for its recovery, but was prevailed upon to suspend the suit until the return of Tudor. When this happened in 98, Tudor pressed payment, and legal advice was taken upon a statement of

⁵ Presumably Josiah Quincy.

the case, and opinion given that General Jackson could not avoid payment. In this exigency it would have been injurious as well to General Jackson as to myself to have sustained a suit on any amount, and I conceiving that in any event he ought not to sustain the whole weight, I took a moiety. Lately Tudor has obtained from General Jackson payment. Mine remains unpaid.

I presume you will upon full recollection of all the circumstances conceive it incumbent on you to indemnify General Jackson. Had the 2d contract provided a profit of 100,000 dollars or more, and in that case had General Jackson refused to transfer to you, it would not be conceived to be right and just, on his part. If this be so, the reverse will be in the same predicament.

If General Jackson, on whom the labour of the business devolved, should be a victim to Tudor, and Mr. Flint, who comparatively did nothing, receive as he has 2,500 dollars from you,⁶ it would be one of those cases of peculiar hardship which seldom occur in the affairs of men. I however all along from the commencement of the business have assured General Jackson that it is impossible that you should suffer him to remain ultimately in this situation in which his confidence in your character has placed him.

I am happy that you have attempted to heal the breach between the federal and true interests of our country. Our happiness if not our existence depends upon a union of the various parts of our country. Union ought to be the cement and watch word of all true friends to their country. Corrosive councils, factious ambition, and discord ought not to have a place in the minds of the wise men of our country. The attempt of some to obtain a new President, at the expence of the dignified and wise existing one, will be repelled by the sober sense of the country. The choice will be between Mr. A. and Mr. J., and I hope with you that Mr. A. will have a considerable majority.

At attempt at assassination of some surveyors under my authority has been made in the woods above 50 miles from my house. Only three persons within the Waldo Patent were concerned in the business. The others were in the Plymouth Patent.⁷ I have made such representations to the Government that I have no doubt the security of persons and property will

⁶ See Flint's receipt for \$2,500 dated New York, 2 April 1793, in BP.

⁷ Knox had trouble with settlers on the Waldo Patent from time to time. For the most serious outbreak, see R. E. Moody, "Samuel Ely: Forerunner of Shays," *New England Quarterly*, v. 117-134. I have not been able to identify the particular piece of rascality referred to here. On this general problem, see also R. H. Gardiner, *Early Recollections*, 66-73.

be enhanced by this event. I shall sail probably this day for St. Georges, where I hope to hear further from you.

Please to present my respective compliments to Mrs. Bingham, Mr. and Mrs. Baring and Miss Bingham.

I am my dear sir

Your friend and humble servant

H. KNOX

*Bingham to Cobb, Philadelphia, 5 August 1800 [CP]*⁸

Dear General:

Philadelphia August 5th 1800

I have received from Mr. Charles Vaughan a letter on the subject of a road which he has projected and is about carrying into execution, which he asserts will be of essential advantage to my Kennebec tract. I cannot competently judge the relative value of this road as it respects my property, but I do not suppose that the most eligible course for the productions of the Kennebec lands will be thro' this route, which will probably only furnish a market during the period that the lands on the Penobscot are in the progress of settlement, for the best road, as well as the nearest, to a port of exportation for a foreign market will be that which passes on the borders of the Kennebec River. I send you a copy of Mr. Vaughan's letter, which will enable you to form an accurate opinion on the subject, and I will thank you to communicate to me what would be most expedient for me to do in this business. It gives me great pleasure to find that the Kennebec lands are in a state of such rapid improvement, as nothing will more effectually tend to induce capitalists to engage in a purchase than the certainty of a speedy settlement and the prospect of immediate returns for their advances.

It is a very interesting circumstance that this property should get into great repute, as early as possible, as well as that a sale should be effected of a great portion thereof, in order to subdivide it, and prevent that jealousy which, in republican governments particularly, is always excited towards very large proprietors. I find by a recent publication of a map of Maine that it is therein asserted I am a contractor for the lands in the rear of your tract, containing nearly three millions of acres, than which nothing can be more fallacious,⁹ but this will greatly assist in adding fuel to

⁸ There is a photostatic copy of this letter in William Bingham Letters, 1795-1803, 70-72, at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

⁹ This was probably Osgood Carleton's map, which was published in Sullivan's *District of Maine* in 1795. See the reproduction facing page 16.

the blaze of envy and jealousy, which are unfortunately passions too prevalent in the human mind, whereas if the state of my land concerns was actually known, there would be but little cause to excite either. Some paragraphs from the *Castine Gazette* have been inserted in our papers, relative to the immense increase in the population of Maine, particularly on the Penobscot, which have had an excellent tendency, by bringing this country into public notice.¹ I am well aware of its peculiar advantages, but whilst such a competition in various parts of the Union takes place, and such a struggle to attract settlers, it becomes necessary to avail ourselves of all circumstances, to engage a preference. I have great confidence in the impression that will be made by the result of the next census, which will probably exhibit this country in a very interesting point of view.

I wait with anxiety for your sentiments with regard to the employment of Mr. Merrick and Dr. Cony, the stations to be assigned to them, in the system of improvement, and the salaries that each will be entitled to. After which, I will accept a plan suitable to circumstances, and put it into immediate execution.

I wished much to have been able to make it convenient to pay you a visit this summer, that we might have freely conversed together on the various details concerning our operations. But I find it impossible to gratify my inclinations.

I am with sincere regard

Dear General

Your obedient humble servant

WM. BINGHAM

General Cobb

*Cobb to Cony, Hallowell, 15 August 1800 [BP]*²

To Daniel Cony, Esquire

Hallowell August 15th. 1800

Sir:

As you have kindly undertaken to superintend such present operations as may be necessary for bringing into a state for settlement, the tract of land on the Kennebeck River purchas'd by William Bingham, Esquire, I have to request your immediate attention to the following measures for that purpose, viz.,

1st. To have run out three or four townships of six miles square each, into

¹ I have not been able to locate the paragraphs referred to.

² There is an almost identical copy of this letter in CP.

half mile square or one hundred acre lots, as you may think best. You will take these townships on the southern line of the tract and up the river so as best to include those places where the settlements now are and those where it is most probable the future settlements will be first made, taking care to run out at the same time all the lots on which settlers now are, that may be within the townships thus run, and such as may be without the townships lines and not far distant therefrom—in all cases these lines must be run, as near as may be, parallel to the township lines.

2dly. To number all the inhabitants now on the lands as well those who are, as those who are not intitled to land as settlers, noting the time when settled, and particularly designating those whom you may determine as properly entitled to land as settlers under the purchase, and all such may receive their deeds immediately after their lots are run on paying the sum stipulated by contract. As to demanding interest on this sum for the past time, it is left to your discretion. As an accommodation to any of the settlers you may allow them to purchase to the amount of one hundred acres in addition to their lots, on paying one dollar per acre therefor; and the settlers who are not entitled to lands by the contract may have their lots at the same price; and in both cases, with interest from this fall or without interest for one year, as you may think will best subserve the general interest of the proprietor.

3dly. After the townships are run out, you may allow any new settlers, who may apply, to purchase one or two hundred acres at one dollar per acre with interest payable in three or four years, and deeds shall be given them on the completion of their payments, agreeably to such contracts as you shall make with them, taking care that if any valuable meadow or intervale are on the lots, an advanced price must be demanded; and in no case to engage any mill seats or lands having iron mines upon them, unless the mill seat in your opinion will be improved to the best future advantage of the settlement, and even then, a better price should be demanded. Of this however you are to judge and determine.

4thly. If in your opinion it should be found necessary to have a few miles of road or roads cut out from the present settlements or from places where others may soon be made, so as to communicate with the great roads of the country, you may have it done, and it would be best to employ the settlers now on the tract, or those who may wish to go on, for this purpose either by contract or otherwise, and for the labour in this business to pay for it in land, if it can be done. Indeed it would be particularly agreeable to have as much of your expenditures as possible paid for in the same way,

such as the surveyors, chainmen, road makers, or any other labour you may require.

5thly. The surveyors will make out, and return to you, regular maps or plans of the townships they survey with the course of the rivers or streams and the settlers lots mark'd thereon, and all those lots that may be run out that are adjacent to those townships, with their field notes that particularly remark the quality of the soil as 1st, 2d, and 3d qualities, with the intervale, meadows, mill seats, iron ore, lime rock, and any other remark they may think worthy of notice.

Finally. Whatever additional measures you may think, that have the interest of the proprietors in view, and that are conformable to those here detail'd, you will adopt; and such information as you acquire by viewing the tract, or from others, as to its general advantages, as to its situation for increase of settlement, as to goodness of soil, as to mines and minerals, lime stone, mill seats, meadow, intervale, etc. etc., you will from time to time communicate to me, and any information you may wish to receive I shall at all times be ready to afford. Measures shall be taken to forward to you on my return from Boston two hundred dollars, and at any time while your measures are in operation, if small sums are required, Mr. Wilde at Hallowell will be requested to afford them, and when the accounts of your disbursements are forwarded to me at Gouldsboro' with your account for your services, the ballance shall be convey'd to you immediately. Relying on your attention to the several objects committed to your charge, and having a confidence in the strickness of your œconomy in the execution of them I wish you the best success in the undertaking, and am dear sir, etc.

D. COBB

Attorney to William Bingham, Esquire

Richards to Cobb, Gouldsborough, 20 August [CP]

Dear General:

Gouldsborough the 20th August 1800

Nelson brought me your two letters on Friday last on his way to Machias, for which place he set off on Sunday on his solitary tour.

We have experienced no important occurrence since you went away. The work on the Point goes on as it did, but slowly. However the new house will be finished nearly about the end of next week, to such a degree that the mason may continue plaistering the whole of it except the entry and porches. The carpenters will then adjourn to your house which had

better be worked upon till finish'd. We shall on these accounts be obliged to leave alone the store till next spring. If so, we may try to cover the floors, doors, etc., with hemlock as old Jones has been lately telling me it is a wood which rats will not gnaw. You may enquire into its virtues at Boston.

Fabrique was down yesterday and is not I believe yet returned. His errand was for provisions which he will be supplied with, his having been consum'd by fire at the falls. He says that his hay is nearly secured, that he has ten men at work upon the dam which will be compleated in ten or twelve days; if so we shall do. Hull and Burr³ are not in the number, and the manner in which he mention'd them was I thought doubtingly as to their determination of going up there. You do not say in what capacity they are to go up. If we make a loan to them, you will have fewer settlers to hunt up, and as you are at the westward of course you will give a preference to western people.

Beal⁴ was down here the other day but I did not see him. I am told he has now two hands falling, by the job, that he has also another whom he has hired by the month and that he purposes to have down 60 or 70 acres this fall. He wishes to try winter wheat which I hope you will be able to procure. What the sloths of Annsburgh are about I know not, but intend riding up there the beginning of next week.

N. Gubtail⁵ and some other fellow are now looking out the road from our upper mill to Taunton Bay. I intend to agree with them when they return, and intend to set about mending roads in my district next week. I am glad you have agreed with Peters to run out that gore. What you say about coasters I will attend to. None have yet made their appearance, and fear we shall find a difficulty in procuring boards for them.

I was at old Jones's the other day who holds on much as usual, being obliged to make sure of what boards he has by him, tho' you know he is not the most easy of any one in his prices, and more especially as he knew they were for my vessel. In a conversation with him he told me that he was not press'd for money, but as he understood from you it would be a

³ Hull may have been a member of the family of Captain Samuel Hull of Mount Desert. The only Burr I can discover east of the Penobscot at that time was Perez Burr, who lived in the Passamaquoddy country, and he does not seem a very likely candidate.

⁴ Beal was apparently one of the men whom Cobb and Richards had induced to reside in one of their "hothouse" settlements. See below, p. 1119, note 1.

⁵ There are four Gubtails listed in the census of 1790 as living in Gouldsborough. Since none of the first names begin with "n," this was presumably a son of one of them.

convenience to us not to call for any cash till your return, he was glad it was in his power to confer the obligation. This is what I wanted to avoid, and therefore acquainted him, what with the cash I should pay him for his boards and the sum due him upon Fabriques notes, he might draw upon me for \$400 at sight or more if he was press'd. There the matter rests. I have heard no further.

As the proceeds of the cargo will not meet the whole of the demands we shall have for cash at Boston, and as it is possible we may require cash for Mariaville and No. 23, exclusive of the notes we have to take up from Jones I have drawn a draft for \$1,500, which you will fill up, if our credit is extended.

Our people are mad to clear up rye fields, and worse than mad to set the woods on fire at this time. The wind has blown heavily now the second day and the western Bay from W. Shaws to nearly old Halls⁶ appears to be envelopped in one volume of smoke. Another species of madness possesses all our carpenters who wish to purchase lots and turn farmers on Union River.

I avail myself of your offer to purchase some things for me at Boston and will trouble you to get a quarter cask of Port wine from Dennie⁷ if he has any very good. If not, dont get me any but let me be considered as half purchaser if you lay in a small stock of Madeira. I almost blush at the commission I am now going to write, but it is a necessary one which must plead its excuse; namely, if in your walks you should meet with an upholsterer who should have for sale a *tolerably decent and delicately conceald machine*, which may save that sex "who never use it" a walk in a winters night, pray buy it for me. Don't let it be extravagant but neat. It is vulgarly styled a close st--l.

Two steels for whetting knives, for I mean to present you with one, and if you can hire a boy a little larger than your Joe or from that to 16 years of age that will answer my purpose, I shall be obliged to you. Charles has left me which in a manner breaks me up. Adieu. With best remembrances to all friends, believe me,

Yours sincerely

J. RICHARDS

Can you also buy for me a book of cookery?

⁶ Colonel Noah Hall, Thomas Cobb's father-in-law.

⁷ Thomas Dennie, merchant, of Boston, sold Cobb and Richards most of their wine. There are several of Dennie's bills in CP.

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*Cobb to Bingham, Boston, 23 August 1800 [BP]*⁸

Boston August 23d 1800

Dear Sir:

I came from Gouldsboro' on the 2d instant, as soon after the receipt of your letter by Mr. Richards as circumstances would permit, and after staying three or four days at Union River for the purpose of expediting the building of our mill and beginning the settlement on that river, I proceeded across the country to Kennebeck. The inclosed Copy of Instructions to Dr. Cony will shew you what arrangements have been made with him for forwarding the settlement of the million acres on that river, and which I hope will meet with your approbation. From thence I came to this place on the 20th. On the morrow I shall proceed to the counties of Worcester and Hampshire, with an intention of procuring settlers agreeably to your wishes, and shall return here in the course of eight or ten days from this, at which time I hope to have the pleasure of a letter from you, and an addition to our credit with Mr. Codman, so that we may meet the engagements we have already made for the season, and which will probably amount to two or three thousand dollars more than we shall be able to obtain from our other resources.

In some future communication I will explain to you those extracts from my letters of 1797 which you remark'd in your letter by Mr. Richards, and will now only observe that your instructions to us in February 1798 sufficiently evinces what your ideas then were of the remoteness of our situation from the current of emigration, and of the necessity, from thence, of *forcing* the settlement of the country.

When Mr. Richards went on to Philadelphia I requested him to converse with you on two subjects in particular: One was respecting the house and farm on which I now live; the other, as to my being elected a senator of this Commonwealth. The first you have noticed in part in your letter, and if you and Mr. Baring consider this place of importance to you in the settlement, I do not wish the indulgence I have requested. My only object in desiring this favour was, that in case of my death my family could have a place to reside at untill they could be more conveniently accommodated. Your interest however may perhaps be as well serv'd by permitting me to make the purchase as otherwise, for the one thousand dollars which you are by contract to afford me for the building of my house, I must otherwise very soon call for, and a lot of land on the harbour I shall always retain. As to being a senator, I have no wish for it. I have been long since sick of public life, and the only reason why I now contemplated it, is that

⁸ There is an almost identical copy of this letter in CP.

perhaps I may be of some advantage to you whenever the subject of your purchases should come before the legislature. If you think otherwise, I wish you to inform me as soon as possible, that I may prevent any measures now taking to bring me forward at the next election for this office. I am not certain that with all the exertion of my friends I should be able to obtain the election, but I shall not even attempt it unless I have your particular permission therefor.

La Roche is dead, and those who have any connection with Mrs. Van Burkell's property, wrapt up under his name, may now perhaps find it difficult to obtain it. He died in the West Indies.

I had a small conversation with Mr. Merrick at Hallowell, but he was so *button'd up* that I obtain'd but little from him. What I did, I must give you at some future time.

I am, dear sir, with esteem
Your obedient servant
DAVID COBB

*Bingham to Cobb, Philadelphia, 1 September 1800 [CP]*⁹

Dear General:

Philadelphia September 1 1800

I have received your letter of the 23d August from Boston from whence I observe you meant to proceed to the counties of Worcester and Hampshire with a view of engaging settlers from that district, where I flatter myself your exertions will be attended with success.

I have attentively perused the instructions given to Dr. Cony, which very minutely describe the duties you wish him to perform. For the present, my views extend no further than having several townships surveyed into farm lots, ready for the operations of settlement, whenever a systematic plan should be formed for that purpose, and to have some person engaged on or near the premisses, who might superintend and have the inspection of the same, that there might not exist any longer an appearance of a neglect or a dereliction of the property. I am fearfull that Dr. Cony may construe your instructions in too extensive a point of view, as you authorize him to sell lands to settlers on credit and make roads, as well as adopt whatever additional measures he may think will have the interest of the proprietors in view and are conformable to those you have detailed. Now as Dr. Cony does not appear, from the opinions you have impressed me with, to possess those qualities requisite for an extensive

⁹ There is a photostatic copy of this letter in William Bingham Letters, 1795-1803, 77-83, at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

undertaking of this nature, I think it would be improper to commit too much to his management, which might flatter him with expectations, in which he would not be gratified, and instead of a friend, he might from such disappointment, become an enemy. He is fully capable of having the townships surveyed, which I should prefer being done by contract, and which is the most oeconomical as well as usual mode of effecting that business in the Kennebec district. The price of doing which, being ascertained, and the amount of the stipend to be allowed to him for his services, an exact account of the expences attending the arrangement would be known, which is highly desirable and even necessary, when I have funds to so small an extent that I can possibly devote to such an operation. I wish therefore that in your communications with Dr. Cony you would so manage the business as to conform as nearly as possible to the ideas I now express on the subject. Your instructions to him are very full and explicit and extremely well calculated for the commencement of very active measures with regard to extensive settlements, but this is not at present my object, as I cannot provide the funds for the purpose. I only wish to place the property in a favorable point of view, that I may have an opportunity of engaging monied men in the purchase, at such a rate, as may in some measure compensate for the immense advances I have made for so long a period, and the actual difference in the value of money betwixt the present time and that when the purchase was effected from the State.

Are you capable of forming an opinion on the subject of a sale to any of the great capitalists in Boston, Salem or any other of the commercial towns of New England? I would not make an offer, except there was a probability of its being accepted, which would essentially depend upon the sentiments that are generally entertained of the progressive value and increasing population of the country. If all hopes fail me on this score, I must then have again recourse to an European market, where at present American lands are in great discredit, but when necessity presses, it is natural to expect great sacrifices must be made.

I observe you have had a conversation with Mr. Merrick, but you do not communicate the result. I had entertained a very favorable opinion of his capacity for the execution of a plan of this nature, from the specimen I possessed of his practical ideas, communicated in a letter which I received from him, copy of which I forwarded to you. It certainly requires a man of very great experience, and extensive range of thought, who is well acquainted with human nature, to succeed in such an undertaking. I have no further knowledge of Mr. Merrick than that which I have obtained from the perusal of his letter, joined to the favorable opinions impressed upon

me by his brother in law, Mr. John Vaughan, who has repeatedly conversed with me on this subject.

But at any rate, and whatever the extent of his talents for such an operation, the period has not arrived, when such a person could be engaged for an active scene of employment, as the present steps in this business are only of a preliminary nature.

With respect to the object of your election as a senator of Massachusetts, I cannot see any serious objections to the measure, which will not be counterbalanced by those of an opposite tendency. At the season when the legislature meets, which is usually in winter, no active operations are at that period taking place in the District, with regard to settlement or improvement, and the affairs of the store can be so regulated as to experience no injury from your absence.

When our pretensions on the score of expence and exertion are to be considered by the legislature, as relative to the settlement of the lands, with a view of being exonerated from the claim of settling duties, your knowledge of these circumstances and your influence on the occasion, will be of essential service, and when it is considered that others have obtained the relinquishment of this demand on the part of the State, and that no instance can be produced of such large monied expenditures, I flatter myself that there can be no doubt of success. I sincerely wish that the period had arrived when it would be prudent to solicit this favor from the legislature, as one half of the deeds are in an awkward situation, whilst held in escrow.

I think you may be usefull in another essential point of view, whilst occupying a seat in the legislature. The reputation of our lands has been very much injured from their unfortunate local situation, being placed in a corner of the Union, and not exposed to the inspection of but a few persons who casually visit them. The information necessary to fix their value must therefore be received from men of character and intelligence who reside on them. From the intercourse you will naturally have with the various characters which compose the legislature from the different districts of the State, you will have an opportunity of making an impression highly favorable to our lands, by giving a faithful account of the soil, climate and situation of the country, and of its resources in a commercial point of view, which will not be evidenced to the fullest extent, untill the return of peace and an unmolested trade to Europe and the West Indies.

I have spoken to Mr. Baring on the subject of an additional credit on Mr. Codman and he has agreed to open one for \$2,000. I had really flattered myself that these heavy expences would have been at this period of

LANDS;

For SALE, and SETTLEMENT, in the *District of Maine.*

Young Farmers Attend!

THERE are now offered for sale and settlement, a number of TOWNSHIPS of LAND, on and near to the *Union-River*, in the county of *Hancock*.---This delightful river is only 14 miles in a direct line East, from *Penobscot River*, and runs parallel thereto; some of the Townships are already run out into half mile square Lots; a large double Saw-Mill is now erecting at the great falls, on the Western branch of the river; a road is already laid open from thence, by *Taunten Bay*, so called, to the harbour of *Gouldsbrough*; another road will be opened in the ensuing spring, to the *Penobscot River*; that will come out at or near to the town of *Orrington*, and a communication by water in boats, may be had to the place designed for settlement, from the inhabitants who are now settled at the mouth of the river.

The soil and situation of this tract of country, in a delightful climate, *where diseases are unknown*, is not exceeded by any, and its natural meadows, covered with *blue-joint grass*, must give it a decided preference for settlement, in the estimation of all good Farmers.

As no improvements have as yet been made on these townships, the first settlers will of course have the opportunity of choosing their lots, which contain one hundred and sixty acres each; and the first six families of young industrious and prudent Farmers, such as are determined to acquire property, that apply for settlement in this country, shall have such particular benefits and advantages afforded them, that if rightly improved cannot fail of securing a complete independence to them and their families; and the next six families that shall settle on each of the townships now assigned for improvement, shall have their lots at one dollar per acre, and such accommodations in the mode of payment, as will give satisfaction to the purchasers, and in every instance when the terms of their contract are complied with, they shall receive undeniable titles by warrantee deeds.

All applications are to be made to the subscribers living at *Gouldsbrough*, in the county of *Hancock*, where houses are built for the accommodation of the families of those who may wish to remove into that country, and where they can reside until their own houses are made convenient for their reception.

**DAVID COBB,
JOHN RICHARDS.**

N. B. The *Gouldsbrough Packet* sails monthly from Col. DAVIS, or Capt. CURTIS' Wharf, at the South end of *Boston*, in which settlers, their families and effects may be conveyed to *Gouldsbrough*, and where every assistance will be afforded to those who intend settling in that country.
Gouldsbrough, Sept. 1800.

A Handbill used by Cobb and Richards in one of their many attempts to promote a boom in Maine Lands

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time supported by the sales and resources of our lands, but I find we must wait still longer for this desirable state of things.

I shall address this letter to you at Boston under the care of Mr. Codman, who I shall request to forward it to you, in case you should have taken your departure for Gouldsborough.

I hope to have the pleasure of hearing from you on your return from the interior counties of Massachusetts, when I flatter myself you have succeeded in your efforts. I shall thank you to forward to me all communications from Dr. Cony, as it is highly interesting that I should be acquainted with every circumstance, relative to those lands, which can lead to a more perfect knowledge of them, and which will furnish means of disposing of them to the best advantage. Hitherto I have not had an opportunity of selling them for the price they cost, including interest, but I confidently hope that a favorable change will take place.

I am with sincere regard

Dear General

Your obedient servant and friend

WM. BINGHAM

General Cobb
Gouldsborough

*Cobb to Bingham, Boston, 19 September 1800 [BP]*¹

Dear Sir:

Boston September 19th. 1800

On the 10th instant I returned to this place from my tour to the western counties, when Mr. Codman handed me your letter of the 1st. instant. In this tour thro' the counties of Worcester, Hampshire and part of Middlesex and Essex on the Merrimack adjoining to the State of New Hampshire, I have been much pleas'd with the general good opinion entertain'd by the inhabitants of the eastern country; and the present rage of emigration, particularly from the county of Worcester, on the Merrimack and in New Hampshire, is for the District of Maine. This emigration is now filling, with great rapidity the tract between the Kennebeck and Penobscot, and on the Penobscot River, and in some instances has reach'd the western line of our tract. Settlers for our tract may now be obtain'd in numbers by proper encouragement; and in a short period the western part of the tract, especially towards the north, will be overrun with them.

I shall this day embark on my return to Gouldsboro', where I hope to

¹ There is an almost identical copy of this letter in CP.

arrive by Sunday next, and I must refer you to my next letter for answers to your several letters that have been receiv'd. I shall pay due attention to your several requests. My conversations with Cony impressed him with all the caution and œconomy you have mentioned, and within three days past I have wrote to him repeating the same ideas, agreeably to your wishes, and inclosed him 200 dollars for his use.

You will see our advertisement in the *Centinel*. It is likewise inserted in the Worcester and Portsmouth papers, and hand bills of the same are scatter'd thro' the country.²

I am, dear sir, with due respect

Your obedient servant

DAVID COBB

Cony to Cobb, Augusta, 17 October 1800 [CP]

Augusta 17. October 1800
(Burgoyne's Anniversary)

The Honorable David Cobb, Esquire

Dear Sir:

Since writing to you 27 ultimo I have made a thorough-tour up the Kennebec to see and confer with the settlers, to advise and direct our surveyor, to explore the country and ascertain the best direction to open a road, and generally to obtain more correct information on the subject of operations which are now progressing conformably to your instructions to me of the 15th August last.

1st. *The settlers.* They are about 40 in number interspersed along the banks of the river about 7 miles from the south line. A considerable portion of the lots now occupied were improved on before 1784, part of which were laid out for settlers by the Plymouth Company. They had the promise of 200 acres each. Those appeared obstinate and determined to hold 200 acres, agreeable to a former survey, or quarrel with us. Of this description there are only 6 or 8, some of whom I have accomodated by allowing a lot to one of their sons who has now become a settler. I found it a source of much difficulty, and endeavoured to reason with them on the subject. I read to them the contract between the government and Mr. Bingham (which fortunately I had with me). I admonished them against a procedure which inevitably must involve them in difficulty; told them my

² There is one of these handbills in CP which is reproduced facing page 1077. For the newspaper advertisements, see the *Centinel* for 13, 20, and 27 September 1800.

object and business was not to abridge, but to confirm them in their rights, and to arrange things so as to have them become freeholders; that the government in no instance contemplated settlers having more than 100 acres, and that Mr. Bingham was a gentleman of the strictest honour. As a pledge of that it was sufficient that I appeared as his agent; that they knew and had heard too much of my character to believe me capable of undertaking any business for the government or for an individual, where the object was not honorable, and the pursuit laudable; but fortunately Mr. Bingham, the proprietor and owner of this tract of country, had other and better testimonials: his character stood high in the annals of our country; that he now filled with reputation one of the highest offices the state of Pennsylvania had to confer; that no consideration would induce him to swerve from a line of conduct that would be deemed honorable and proper; that he had expended a large sum of money in the purchase, and must still be at great expence in opening roads and bringing forward the settlement which was now the object contemplated; that they might be assured the contract on his part as it respected them (the settlers) would be honorably complied with; and that nothing more they had a right or ought to expect. These observations and others appeared to produce conviction but not satisfaction. These effects however I have some reason to believe were greater than might have been expected on the minds of a description of people who will always be found on the margin of a new country. I indulge an expectation of an amicable settlement with all of them except 4 or 5. Your opinion and advice on this part of the business I have to request.

2d. *Our surveyor*. I found him proceeding in the business assigned him. He will no doubt compleat two townships (the lotting) this season, probably by the middle of November, to wit, Nos. one and two, east side the river adjoining the south line,³ which I was induced to expect would find as ready a sale and settlement as any part of the tract. A further survey of the one or two townships on the west of the river I have in contemplation and which probably shall be able to effect early next spring. Several enquiries and applications for lots have been made, but the idea of *one dollar* per acre for the first settlers to pay is generally considered to high. They tell me Mr. Vaughan and some others offer better terms in those townships east of the Million Acres and south of the Pasquatiquis, to wit, at 4/ and 4/6 per acre. *Quere*: would it not be for the interest of our proprietor, Mr. B., under existing circumstances, to let the first 15 or 20 in each township

³ The present Bingham and Brighton Plantation.

who shall actually settle have one lot at 75 cents per acre, whence probably we shall be able to turn the current of emmigration? On this head you will also please to advise me.

3rd. *On the subject of opening a public road.* On this head I am much gratified, having discovered a rout that more than equals any anticipations. On my return from the Million Acres I cam thro' the woods being determined to render my journey as useful to Mr. B. as possible. I did not parley with trifling difficulties or fatigue. The result was I found the situation of the country highly favourable for a road, and particularly nearly in the direction we could wish. This road will pass thro' two townships owned by Colonel Barnard⁴ and others from whom and the settlers I expect aid in opening the road which will shorten the distance into the two townships we have now lotting 12 miles, when compared with the circuitous, serpentine and savage rout now travelled. I shall have it looked-out and spotted this fall before the snow falls, and take measures by a *contract* to have it cleared open and rendered passable the next season, being an object of the first concern, connected with future operations. This road will leave the town of Canaan at Skowhegan Falls, pass thro' east part of Barnards No. 1, on the east side a considerable pond which emptieth into Wesserunsett, continuing thro' No. 1 in 2nd range adjoining Bingham's tract, strikes the south line of Million Acres about 3 miles east of the river, and thence inclining a little more westerly, so as to strike the river below Austin's Stream, which you will readily perceive by casting your eye on the plan, will be a very direct straight rout. The distance from Canaan to the settlement below Austin's Stream will be about 22 miles instead of 36, the rout now travelled.⁵

4th *Situation of the country, quallity of soil, etc.* It really appeared mountainous, and hilly, tho' most of the south part of the tract I presume to be capable of settlement. The little intervale on the river is taken up by the settlers, and the mountains in near are high and steep. After passing over those highths, the situation appeared better. Our surveyor fell in with *horrid haricanes* which retarded his progress very much, the forest some years since being swept to the ground.

I have not time to ad. Be assured that my best exertions shall be employed to bring forward the various operations that shall from time to

⁴ This was Moses Barnard, who, with his associates, held four-fifths of the present towns of Cornville and Madison. See M. Greenleaf, *Survey of the State of Maine*, 413.

⁵ This road would follow roughly the present Route 147 of Maine.

time be deemed proper, and as far as practicable promote the objects submitted.

Believe me, dear sir,
 With sentiments of respect and esteem
 Your obedient servant
 DANIEL CONY

*Cobb to Bingham, Gouldsborough, 5 November 1800 [CP]*⁶

Dear Sir: Gouldsboro' November 5th. 1800

Immediately after my return from Boston I found it necessary to visit our new settlement, Mariaville, on the Union River, where I remain'd for some time to *push* forward the contractor, who had been delitery, so as to secure the dam and mills against the approaching winter, and to have them so far compleated as to be ready for business in the spring. This I hope I have effected, and this must be my apology for not giving you a letter agreeably to my promise in my last of September 19th. from Boston. Indeed, out of the six weeks since I left Boston, I have been four of them in the woods. When I was at Mariaville I had the country reconoitred from thence to Penobscot River, and the distance is not more than fourteen miles, and but eight to a settlement made this year at the south east corner of Eddy's Town, No. 10,⁷ from which there is a road to the river, so that we have only eight miles of road to make to have a communication from our settlement to the Penobscot.

Inclosed you have a copy of Doctor Coney's last communication. The one of the 27th of September which he mentions was only acknowledging the receipt of the 200 dollars which I remitted him from Boston. On the two subjects which the Doctor wishes advise, I have to request your directions. Since I am on the subject of the Kennebeck lands, I will relate, as far as my memory serves me, the conversation I had with Mr. Merrick when I was last there, but I must request that it remains with you a profound secret, as your communications do with me relatively to him. When I call'd upon him, I inform'd him that you was contemplating a system for the improvement of your Million Acres on the Kennebec, and that you had in one of your late letters requested me, whenever I came this way, to call and converse with him on the subject; and if a system should

⁶ There is a photostatic copy of this letter in William Bingham Letters, 1795-1803, 86-89, at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

⁷ The present Eddington.

be adopted, whether he would probably be at leisure to undertake the execution of it, and what he would consider as an adequate return for his services. He answer'd, by relating that his brother John Vaughan, when he was there the last year, convers'd with him about your lands, and that he had receiv'd a letter from you, after Vaughan's return, requesting his opinion of the best mode for bringing forward the tract into a state of settlement, that he had communicated a plan for that purpose, but that he had heard nothing of it since (he related this I thought with some temper, as if he had been disappointed in not being employ'd after he had communicated his plan); that he had never contemplated any fix'd salary or stipend for his services; that his plan would be to take by contract five or six townships on the southern line of the tract—more he would not undertake—and operate upon them, in surveying the townships into lots, cutting roads, building mills and bringing on 20 or 30 families upon each township, as may be agreed upon; the proprietor to make all the advances; and at the close of the contract he and the proprietor were equally to divide the remaining lands and the amount that had been receiv'd for the sale of any of the lands, he repaying one half of the advances that had been made. He places his time, trouble and personal expences against the first purchase of the soil. Of this however I am not positively certain. He may repay his proportion of the first purchase as he does of the advances, and I think interest is not to be allow'd in any case. My answer was that I did not know but that this mode of conducting the business might be as agreeable to you as any other, but that I presum'd, as you had heretofore proceeded in a different manner, you would still prefer fixing a stipend for his services as you had done with me and others. He answer'd that he would not undertake to settle a new country for any body on any other terms than what he had mentioned, and that he was then in treaty with a person who was an owner of 2 or 3 townships, whose answer he expected in the course of a month, and if he engaged with him it would be out of his power to have any concern with your lands. In the course of the conversation I inform'd him that Dr. Coney had been appointed by the Treasurer of the Commonwealth to number the settlers on the Kennebeck purchase agreeably to your contract with the government, by which likewise you was obliged to run out all settlers lots that were on the lands, and as I had lately receiv'd your directions to have this business compleated, I had call'd upon Dr. Cony, and conceiving it would be attended with œconomy, when running the settlers lots, to have the townships on which they resided run at the same time, I had directed the Doctor accordingly. Merri-
rick highly approv'd of the plan and thought it of the first consequence

that all such rubbish as settlers rights etc. should be adjusted before any serious operations are commenced upon the tract. After this information, I could perceive that a burthen was remov'd from his mind, and he convers'd with more freedom; but he still persisted in the assertion, that he never would undertake to settle a new country upon any other terms than what he had before mentioned, as he was determin'd to have a full share of what was the work of his own hands.

Your letter of the 5th. August inclosing C. Vaughans was at my house when I returned from Boston. I saw Vaughan at Boston who told me he had your directions to call upon me for assistance in cutting a road near the Kennebeck lands. I told him I would not contribute a farthing, that we had business of that kind enough of our own. The truth is the Vaughan's want this road to accomodate some townships they are concern'd with, and for their own conveniency. It may probably run within five miles or perhaps three of your lands. The Academy Township, which is No. 4 on your little map directly adjoining the s. east corner of your tract is theirs, and No. 3 is Copstown, in which I likewise suspect they are concern'd, so that by Vaughan's own stating this road of his will only run 6 or 8 miles in front of your tract and from 3 to 5 miles distant therefrom. The rest of it goes off east thro' townships in which they are interested and comes out at Bangor, which is No. 1 of 2d range in your little map, on Penobscot River. This road is of so little advantage to you at present that I am at a loss to conjecture upon what principles Mr. Vaughan could have call'd upon you for assistance; and if the road Dr. Cony proposes to cut should be compleated, he cannot with any propriety ask of you a contribution of any consequence on the score of your lands being benefited by his road. If he had requested of you 100 dollars it would have been modest, but to ask for 500, he might as well have requested a sufficiency for the whole road. If you are disposed to contribute any thing, I should think that 100 dollars would be generous 'till the road comes within your tract, and then you will naturally bear a larger portion of the expence. You will have roads to make to come out from your tract by and by, when I will warrant that not a man among them will contribute a shilling to assist you in the business.

You have frequently expressed your anxiety for an application to the legislature to obtain a remission of the settling duty etc. I have certainly heretofore given you my opinion on this subject, that it was your interest not to make the application 'till the expiration of the 12 years stipulated in the contract as the ultimate period for settlers to be placed on the lands, as it is probable by that time the public mind will be so compleatly

possess'd of the magnitude of your ex[er]tions and expenditures, and of your steady perseverance in the best measures for settling the country, that if you then should fall short of the number of settlers as stipulated for, it would be considered as occasioned by circumstances of such a nature as human foresight and exertions could not controule, and that any member of the government who should wish a forfeiture from you under such circumstances would be dispis'd. But if I was rightly inform'd by some country member of the House on my late visit to the westward that a motion was made at the last May sessions for an inquiry into the state of your contract with the government, and which for want of time was referr'd to the next winter session, you will have this business bro't forward sooner than I could have wished it.

I have frequently convers'd on this subject with a great variety of characters, many of whom are now in the legislature, and they have in every instance given it as their decided opinion that if you can fairly shew that you have expended in your exertions for settling this country, the amount of the sum contemplated as the forfeiture on failure of settlement, that government will never demand a shilling, even if one half the number of settlers are deficient; but on the contrary, they are equally decided, that every shilling will be demanded. This opinion you must be sensible has been mine for some time past, and I am certain it is your interest to view it in a similar light.

From the best information I can obtain you will not succeed in the sale of any of your lands among the capatalists of New England, or at least among those east of Connecticut. How you may succeed there I am not able to say.

I will endeavour to give you another letter in the course of a post or two, when I will further notice the several subjects you have requested in your different letters.

I am dear sir with esteem
etc.

D. C.

H. Jackson to Cobb, Boston, 5 November 1800 [CP]

Boston November 5. 1800
and November 8

My old Friend:

I received your favor of the 24 October by the packet. Captain Talbot has been a lodger in our house for several weeks. I communicated to him that part of your letter wherein you mention your son, to which he

appeared well disposed. Henry, after having been on board about 3 or 4 weeks, made us a visit for a day or two to obtain some articles he was in want of. He returned on board again yesterday. I directed him to write you by the return of the packet, and enclose you Mr. Callenders bill, and an account of the articles Mr. Barney Smith had supplied him with, also a memorandum of every article of cloathing etc. that he took on board with him, which he promised me to do, but I have my doubt on this head. I at the same time impress'd his mind, that after this equipment that you expected that his pay would be fully sufficient to support him in his present station, and in order to effect that desirable object, he must be very carefull of his cloathing and in the expenditure of his money, and to æconomize and be prudent in every instance. I learn from some of the officers that he was attentive and active while on board and gave great satisfaction.

I observed the advertisement you allude to respecting the defaulting in the taxes on the Ohio shares and until then I had supposed that some person was directed by me to attend to that business. On the 2d of October I wrote to my friend who resides at Marietta to immediately pay all the tax's due on your and my shares, and to draw on me at sight for the amount, and I calculate by the 10th of this month to receive the draft with the information that the tax's are paid.⁸

Mrs. Archbold received the two barrels of potatoes, and is highly gratified for them.

Yesterday was a high electioneering day particularly in this town, the *Fed's* in the support of Mr. Quincy, and the *Repub* in favor of our friend Doctor Eustis—and so great exertions were never made on the like occasion and indeed on any other. The voters exceeded four hundred more than was ever known to be given in the town. I suppose that near one thousand of the votes were illegal. Altho' Quincy had a small majority in this town, yet Eustis is choosen in the district by a majority of two hundred and upwards.

I enclose some of the last papers with your friend Hamiltons letter to Mr. Adams, with a short reply said to be written by N. Webster.⁹ Mr. H. has done it for himself in the estimation of all honest and good men. I expect he will be handled without mittens by all the friends of Mr. Adams, and the supports of his administration. By the papers you will observe that our Commissioners in France have sign'd a treaty with that Repub-

⁸ This must refer to shares in the Ohio Company. Jackson had known Rufus Putnam in Boston and the "friend" at Marietta may well have been he.

⁹ On this episode, see *Works of John Adams*, ix. 239-240.

lic,¹ and the Commissioners are hourly expected to arrive on the Continent. This it is hoped will have a happy and pleasing effect on the minds of all parties in our country, and be the means of reconciling all interests into one great family of harmony and peace.

Our friend General Knox proposed to be here this evening to take his seat in the legislature on Tuesday next, but by a letter I received from him a few days since, he wrote me he was much afflicted with a severe rheumatism, which he was apprehensive would detain him at St. Georges. However I little expect him this evening in the Portsmouth stage, as I think a good jolt may be of service to his fat and heavy carcase. On some accounts I wish him here, as he proposes to come without his *heavy baggage*, but I believe he contemplates at the January term to take up the line of march with his whole garrison, light and heavy baggage, and take quarters for the winter in the capital. Of this I am not in the secret. I learn it through another channel. It is well known that my opinion and wish are contrary to this movement, it being attended with an enormous expence, without the least advantage whatever, and liable to unpleasant observation from those who daily experience disappoint[ment] in his non compliance with his engagements. As it respects myself every thing remains as it has done for some time, and I frequently doubt whether I *feel or act* as I ought in my present situation. I am really at a loss to know what is best to be done. I am fully satisfied he will do all and every thing that is in his power that I can reasonably wish or ask of him. I assure you my dear friend I am press'd down with the weight and heavy burthens of this unhappy concern, and every year I find my self less able to bear up under it. It is a source of much thought and anxiety. Mr. B. still continues to refuse the payment of my draft, but I am determined never to give up this object until I have justice done me. This business shall not long rest in its present situation. To my last letter which was dat'd September 28 I have not as yet received any answer. I intend writing him again in a few days, and know from him what are his final determinations. All our friends are well and are going on in the good old way which I expect they will follow to their graves, eating, drinking, sleeping, and praying. If Eustis is not too much taken up, he will write you. Remember me kindly to Mr. Richards, and believe me

Very sincerely your friend

H. JACKSON

¹ This was the Convention of 1800, by which France dropped the Franco-American alliance while the United States assumed the claims of its citizens against France.

1800

1087

*Bingham to Cobb, Philadelphia, 8 November 1800 [CP]*²

Dear General:

Philadelphia November 8th 1800

I received your letter of the 19 September dated at Boston and wrote after your return from the western counties, in which you mention the general good opinion which prevails concerning the lands of the eastern country, which I should be happy to see exemplified by a more numerous emigration into that country, especially, after having expended such an immense sum of money in the purchase and improvement of these lands.

I have waited for the letter you promised to write me (in reply to several which I had addressed to you) immediately on your return to Gouldsborough, before I communicate to you any further ideas on the subject of our property, which has become an essential object of my attention.

I suppose you have been prevented by indisposition or urgent business from writing.

I observe that in addition to the \$1,500 which you recently drew on Mr. Codman, you have again passed your draft on him for \$2,500 more.

This is certainly not consonant to the ideas with which Mr. Baring and myself were impressed when we had our last explanations on the subject of expenditures, but is decidedly in opposition to my views both as relative to personal convenience, as well as calculation with respect to the advantages of such large disbursements in money. I have had sufficient experience on this score to direct my opinions, as I have made my observations on all the great settlements which have been undertaken in this country.

I shall add nothing further at present on the subject than to inform you that I could have saved Mr. Codman's commission of $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent etc., if I had been previously informed of this want of these funds and had assented to the supply of them by remitting the amount to the Branch Bank, there to be carried to your credit.

The success of the New England commerce has been such as to have greatly increased the monied capital of their country. I do not observe that our Maine Lands have begun to attract the attention of these capitalists. I wrote you before on this subject.

I am with regard

Dear General

Your obedient humble servant

WM. BINGHAM

General Cobb
Gouldsborough

² There is a photostatic copy of this letter in William Bingham Letters, 1795-1803, 90-92, at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

*Cobb to Bingham, Gouldsborough, 17 November 1800 [CP]*³

Gouldsboro' November 17th. 1800

William Bingham, Esquire

Dear Sir:

In reviewing the rough copy of my last letter of the 5th. instant, I suspect I have omitted in that letter the following, which is the last part of that paragraph in which I mention the subject of applying to the legislature for a remission of the settling duty, and comes in directly after these words "who should wish a forfeiture from you under such circumstances would be dispis'd," viz., "But if I was rightly inform'd by some country member of the House on my late visit to the westward that a motion was made at the last May sessions for an inquiry into the state of your contract with the government, and which for want of time was referr'd to the next winter session, you will have this business bro't forward sooner than I could have wished."

The inclosed is a copy of a letter I receiv'd a few days since. As it might afford you some information for your future directions respecting the Kennebeck lands, at the same time give you a consolation that that property is coming into notice, I have thought it best to communicate it to you. I am not acquainted with the writer, but he was a lawyer at Concord near Boston, and had an appointment of a majority in one of the late disbanded regiments.⁴

Our packet has just returned from Boston with our supplies and stores for the winter. She is now taking in a cargo of boards and sparrs for Charlestown, South Carolina, where she will remain in the southern coasting for the winter, and for sale if a good market offers. This mode of improving the packet for the winter season, either coasting at the southward or going to the West Indies, has ever been a favorite measure with me, but thro' yours or Mr. Barings intimations on this subject I have never been able to effect it, when it is not possible for either of you to be acquainted with the *little business* of this country by which great profits are to be made. There has not been a winter since we came here, but what we could have made from 2 to 5,000 dollars by the packet, and have had all the property cover'd, but instead of this she must lay at the wharf six months in the year to as much injury as a voyage at sea. By thus imploying

³ There is a photostatic copy of this letter in William Bingham Letters, 1795-1803, 93-96, at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

⁴ The letter referred to is William Jones to Cobb, Concord, 20 October 1800, in CP. In it Jones offers to act as Bingham's agent on the Kennebec tract and to bring some settlers with him.

the packet and the improvement of the mills (if the prejudice was not so great against them), we should experience returns more than adequate to all your expences in this country, and I am persuaded we never should have lost sight of this as one of the modes of improving of this country if we had not been blinded by theories that are inapplicable to its local situation.

The mills at Mariaville are excellent, and nearly compleated. An establishment is made there for lumbering the present winter, and altho' every thing is new and from thence a number [of] difficulties must be encounter'd and a greater portion of contingences calculated upon, yet, if we are not deceiv'd in the activity of the principal, we calculate a generous return, in the ensuing season, for the expence of the establishment however large it has been. I think we cannot be deceiv'd, without some great unforeseen misfortune, and I sincerely hope that the returns will be so generous as to convince you and others of the propriety and advantage of making like establishments upon all the important streams within the purchase.

I have not heard from Dr. Cony since my last, but as at the close of this season he will naturally present his accounts for payment, it will be necessary for me to be in cash to meet that demand. I shall therefore be under the necessity of drawing upon you in the beginning of next month for 1,000\$, 500\$ of which I consider as the remaining part of my stipind for this year, agreeably to my wishes express'd to you in my letter of 26th. March last. The other will be for the payment of services done on the Kennebeck, 200\$ of which have already been advanced to Dr. Cony, and as he has inform'd by his letter that two townships will be compleated this season, this together with his own services will certainly exceed the 500\$. Whatever it does I will take care to provide for.

After the packet is dispatch'd I shall give myself the pleasure of affording you another letter.

I am dear sir etc.

D. C.

Ross to Cobb, Union River, 19 November 1800 [CP]

Dear Sir: .

I have sent by Mr. Fabrique 2½ gallons of honey for Virginia Todd,⁵ a kegg of butter for Mr. Richards, and your two volumes of Count Rum-

⁵ Not identified unless it is a facetious name for a drink.

ford. I caught a woodchopper at Langden's⁶ the other day who owed your concern about three dollars. I never could get any thing of him but found his credit good with Langden from whom I took a shawl, which I take the liberty of sending herewith. 'Twill do for Miss P. Cobb⁷ to ride in this winter. You must forgive me this liberty, and you will add much to my happiness if you can spare me by the return of the vessel the perusal of a few volumes of your books—Campbells tour to India,⁸ Burnets history of his own times, and any thing you can spare. Sermons I make for myself. My best wishes attend you all, and believe me to be

With much respect and esteem

Dear sir

Your most obedient servant

DON ROSS

Honorable D. Cobb, Esquire

*Bingham to Cobb, Philadelphia, 24 November 1800 [CP]*⁹

Dear General:

Philadelphia, November 24 1800

I have received your favor of the 5 November inclosing a communication from Dr. Cony of the 17th October in which he mentions that he had recently made a visit to the Kennebec tract, with a view of making arrangements with the settlers and superintending the survey of the two townships which I observe will be completed in the course of the present season.

I suppose the two townships most eligibly situated for settlement have been selected, and that the lots have been run out in such manner, that the lines can always be found. Dr. Cony mentions that he has in contemplation a further survey of two townships on the west side of the river, which he meant to have undertaken in the spring.

On this point I request you to write him and make known that my views are altogether confined for the present to the surveys that are now making and therefore not to undertake any further operations whatever, especially the cutting of roads or any species of improvement that will in-

⁶ This was Major Alfred Langdon, a tavern keeper and "merchant" in what is now Ellsworth. See A. H. Davis, *History of Ellsworth*, 25-26.

⁷ Cobb's daughter Mary, who was known as Polly.

⁸ Presumably a reference to *A Journey over land to India etc.* (London, 1795) by Donald Campbell of Barbreck.

⁹ There is a photostatic copy of this letter in William Bingham Letters, 1795-1803, 97-102, at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

volve the disbursment of money, my determination being to involve myself in but very trifling expenditures for this property untill I can procure some cooperation, as well as reimbursment for my heavy advances, by the sale of a portion thereof to some persons who would participate in the expences attending such operations.

I think I have fully explained to you in a former letter my views of this subject, and it would only terminate in disappointment to all parties if I was to attempt any thing further. Such purchases and operations of improvement have their limits and can only be supported by the capitals of joint companies, and not by the confined means of any individual. When I authorized the survey of two townships, I calculated the expence, according to what I find others have paid, who have contracted for similar surveys in the same district, which, added to the allowance to be made to Dr. Cony for his services, would form the full amount of the sum I mean to expend in the present state of things. This prevents the appearance of a dereliction of this property and is placing it in a train for more extensive operations whenever the period shall arrive which may render a more active progress expedient.

Necessity alone has prompted a recourse to the system of settlement which was not embraced within the views of the contract, formed betwixt General Knox and myself when the purchase was effected, it having been a stipulation betwixt the parties that the lands should be sold as early as possible, which was at that time deemed the most eligible mode of liquidating the business.

I hope the expences you have made for Mariaville settlement will induce settlers to resort there and that they will undertake the road to Eddys Township and receive land in exchange therefor, if such road should be necessary. We must resort exclusively to such measures of œconomy as will obtain our ultimate object, without the advance of money. Whenever our pretensions to be released from the payment of the settling duties come forward, expenditures made thro' the medium of a commutation of lands for labor, will count equally with money expended, as it is immaterial in what manner the payments are effected.

The legislature will always make allowance for a great proportion that will be expended on the lower tract, which by being further removed from settlements, requires more expence and exertions.

Besides, as this tract is a frontier, it must be more desireable to pay attention to its settlement.

With respect to Mr. Merricks prospects, they are of such a nature as in the present state of this property would be inadmissable. Besides they

would involve great difficulties in a future liquidation, from being of so complicated a nature. Such an arrangement might better suit a concern of a few townships, and might under certain modifications, not be ineligible.

It is not worth while to enter into any explanations with Mr. Merrick at the present moment, as matters are not ripe for the commencement of active operations.

I am sorry to find it your opinion that there is no prospect of disposing of these lands to any of the New England capitalists. I had flattered myself that a few years experience of the quality of the soil, from the productions thereof and the reports of settlers, would have prompted a disposition to make investments therein, and that they would prefer making purchases in their own neighbourhood, rather than trust to the delusive representations of southern lands, from which they have already so essentially suffered.

In regard to Dr. Cony's arrangements with the old settlers, I think he had better satisfy the 4 or 5 persons who hold out, rather than have any discontented persons, who may be disposed to make disturbances. He may so manage the business as to have the appearance of taking an equivalent for the excess of the quantity of land, beyond what their rights extend to, in labor or produce, so as not to form, by the settlement he makes with them, a plea which the other settlers may attempt to avail themselves of.

I think it might contribute to the encouragement of settlers to introduce upon the lands 15 or 20 at the easy rate of 75 cents per acre, which Dr. Cony recommends. It is to be noticed that every settler exonerates me from the payment of a settling duty, which is an advantage to a certain extent.

I have viewed on the map the projected road of Dr. Cony, which will pass thro' the property of other persons, 15 miles at least of the distance contemplated, which I observe to be 22 miles. They will be proportionably benefited, and whenever the road shall be carried into effect, they should contribute their equitable share. He does not mention at what rate it could be contracted for, which would be a guide to my decision at any future period.

You were perfectly right in refusing to contribute to Vaughan's road, under existing circumstances. I referred the application to you and am not disappointed in the result. Your superior judgment and local knowledge could suggest reasons for not complying with his request, which would not have occurred to me. I have subscribed small sums for laying out several roads in this state, but in no instance where my property was not evidently and essentially benefited.

1800

1093

I shall endeavor to make a remittance to Mr. Codman in a few days, for one half of the \$2,500 which you and Mr. Richards drew on him.

I expect the letters you promised me, in further reply to the objects referred to in my recent letters addressed to you, and am with sincerity and regard

Dear General

Your obedient humble servant

WM. BINGHAM

General Cobb
Gouldsborough

Ross to Cobb, Union River, 2 December 1800 [CP]

Union River 2d December 1800

Dear Sir:

I had the honor of your esteemed favor of the 26th ultimo by Mr. Fabrique. The Mariaville frigate has got into the river, tho' neither the great Bonaparte or my Scotch friends have yet announced themselves; and a certain *Je ne sai quoi* of the gums, occasioned by a memorandum on the back of your letter, has not yet been appeased. I will pay attention to your directions respecting the Mariaville store.¹

The mill business I have seen executed according to your instructions and have herewith sent your part of the agreement. You will pardon me for mentioning one or two remarks that occurred to me on perusal of the writings previous to their execution, and mentioned to Mr. Peters in presence of Mr. Fabrique. Shoud Messrs. Peters and Pond² hold the mill long enough to answer their purposes and decline demanding a deed from you, and refuse paying the purchase money agreeably to contract, how can they be compelled? Ought there not to have been notes of hand or bonds for the different payments and on stamped paper? Or shoud the mill by any fatality be destroyed, vizt., by fire or freshets before Messrs. Peters and Pond can have any benefit from her, will it not open a door for litigation?³ I have thought it my duty to mention this to you, not confiding in my own opinion as right, but to give you an opportunity of revolving the subject in your own mind.

¹ The "Mariaville Frigate" was the facetious name given the boat bringing stores to the settlement. The "great Bonaparte" and the "Scotch friends" were apparently those in charge of the boat. Cobb's memorandum must have announced that liquor was on board.

² These were the two men who had contracted to build the mill.

³ Ross was right. In 1809 Peters and Pond brought suit against John Richards. See their appeal of the decision dated February, 1810, in CP.

What I conceive to be my duty I hope will never be a trouble especially when so politely urged as your request to explain the logg prosecution. I must confess that I had not before rightly comprehended your request. If I have not now, I will subscribe Numbhead. Upon each suit commenced and settled by me the cost of suit was calculated at nine dollars, which was included in the notes they gave for the timber rent. Of the whole number prosecuted only two remain from whom nothing has been obtained either for rent or costs, vizt., old Nathaniel Smith and one eyed Benjamin Smith. The subjoined list of those prosecuted will further elucidate the matter.⁴

There is nothing new here. The river is about shutting up. My friend the Major has been much reduced. I hope he's on the mending hand. The cruel unrelenting hand of some blood thirsty murderers has been on my poor innocent Romeo, poor pussy. My Romeo is gone, he is no more. Monkies, us [?] ⁵ do not rejoice, and Fidele stay at home, nor trust the haunts of the boor.

Mine and my wifes best respects attend you and your good family at all times, and believe me to be particulary [*sic*]

Dear sir, with much respect and esteem
Your much obliged humble servant
DONALD ROSS

I have got no more butter neither can I at present hear of any. I had a letter from Colonel Hunewell lately who makes warm and kind inquiries of you and family, and also of Mr. Richards.

Honorable David Cobb, Esquire

Cobb to Ross, Gouldsborough, 10 December 1800 [CP]

Dear Ross:

Gouldsboro' December 10th. 1800

Your favour of the 2d instant per post duely came to hand. I hope the Mariaville frigate has safely landed her cargo, that you have been gratified with a taste of her fruit, and that your mental appetite is feasting on your countrymen and the Frenchman.⁶

I am obliged by your kind intimations respecting the validity of our agreement with Peters and Pond, but I presume it is as good against them

⁴ For the Smiths, see above, p. 996, note 2.

⁵ This reading is not clear. There is a distinct comma after what looks like "Monkies." It seems to refer to one of Ross's household pets in any event.

⁶ This is a reference to the books which Cobb had sent.

as a bond or notes on stamp'd paper, and the estate is as secure to us as a mortgage could make it. If the mills in their possession suffers by fire or freshets, it is there loss. If they have property without them to make good their agreement with us—and this would be the case if we held their bonds and a mortgage—indeed I know of no instrument more perfect and secure. Our promises of performance are mutual. We promise that we will deed upon such conditions; they promise that they will comply with those conditions. If they do not, they are liable to be sued for non performance and so they would be if we held their stamp'd notes if they did not pay them. This mode of agreement was form'd by one of the first lawyers in Boston, and I do not see but it is compleatly secure.

I drop a tear for poor Romeo. When Fabrique went from here I requested him to inform the Major⁷ that if he had not yellow eyes and his bowels were in good order, to take a tea spoonfull of your tincture of the bark two or three times in a day in part of a glass of wine, and to drink Port wine and water or your claret and water for his common drink and to eat meat brothes without the fat upon them. He is reduced too low. He wants braising with animal diet, if he has an appetite. Perhaps the cold weather will benefit him. It is extreemly difficult to proscribe for a person without seeing him.

Your return of the lumber chops [?] is right. Monk and Fidelia are well and in good spirits, but like their master they confine themselves to the house in cold weather; and the rest of our four ledged [*sic*] and two legged animals with your humble servant, are in their usual health and spirits, with a plenty of beef, hog and poultry, sausages, cyder and some little rum which God grant may be the happy portion of you and the Major and every body at Union River and every where else, for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord Amen.

D. C.

*Cobb to Bingham, Gouldsborough, 10 December 1800 [CP]*⁸

William Bingham, Esquire

Gouldsboro' December 10th. 1800

Dear Sir:

By the last mail I receiv'd your letter of the 8th. ultimo in which you made some observations on our late draft for 2,500 dollars and which

⁷ This may well have been Major Meletiah Jordan, one of the first settlers in Ellsworth.

⁸ There is a photostatic copy of this letter in William Bingham Letters, 1795-1803, 103-106, at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

exceeds our credit on Mr. Codman about 1,500. I assure you it was with the greatest pain and reluctance that we did it, and nothing short of a real loss of property to the concern could have induced it; and I persuade myself that on your being acquainted with our reasons for it, you will amply justify us in making the draft. On my return from the westward, as I have heretofore inform'd you, I visited our improvements on the Union River, where I remain'd for some time, during which, as the season was advancing, it became necessary to determine the manner in which the new mills were to be occupied during the ensuing winter and spring. Our contractor had frequently intimated his willingness to take the mills when finish'd on the usual custom of the country, and indeed we had depended upon him, altho' nothing decisive had taken place. (This custom is, the owner of the mills finds the oxen and their forage for the winter, chains, sleads, etc. The tenant is at the expence of all the labour in taking care of the oxen, gitting logs and sawing them into boards. Then the owner and tenant equally divide the boards that are made. This custom is equally advantageous when the business is pursued with activity.) In conversing with him now, I found he was ready to engage in the mills, but as the object was so great, requiring eight additional hired hands to his family, he inform'd us he could not undertake it without our advances to him, as it was not in his power to procure provisions and stores for so large a family and the necessary supplies to the families of some of his labourers during the winter. After my return from the mills, Mr. Richards and myself frequently revolv'd this subject in our minds, and at last we were reduced to this alternative, either to let these mills remain a dead capital for the year, which will have cost sixteen hundred dollars, with the addition of three or four hundred dollars more for a salary to some person to reside there, to prevent the accidental or wilfull distruction of the whole property, or to advance fifteen hundred dollars in provisions and stores, with a moral certainty of its repayment next summer with the addition of 25 per cent, and with almost as great certainty of receiving as the nett proceeds of the mills, from 1,000 to 1,500 dollars more. On this view of the subject we determin'd to make the draft and justify ourselves hereafter, rather than sacrifice so much property of the concern. As the winter was approaching and our packet was just then sailing for Boston, for the last time this year, and to return here immediately with supplies for our store for the winter, you will readily perceive that there was not time to give you that previous notice by which you could have remitted to Boston so as [to] meet our wants. I please myself with the idea that after viewing this state of facts, the subject that was so disagreeable

to you before, will meet your full approbation; and I anticipate such ample returns during the next season as cannot fail of making you doubly satisfied with our proceedings in this case.

Some time since you observ'd that Mr. Baring had express'd to you that sum I had charg'd for having his deeds recorded, which was 68\$, he thought rather too extravagant. Mr. Baring will recollect that in his letter to me and in his conversation with me here on the subject of his deeds, he particularly enjoin'd it that they must be sent to the different offices by some confidential person who was to remain 'till they were recorded and return with them here; for this purpose I employ'd my son, as I inform'd you by letter at that time, to whom I gave two dollars per day and his expences (about the usual price for the labour of lumbermen in this country). He was sixteen days on the business, at Machias and Castine. The Register's fees at the two offices were 25½ dollars on Mr. Baring deeds for which I hold these receipts. You had some small deeds recorded at the same time, and I made a proportionate distribution of the expence as I then conceiv'd to be just and right, and I charg'd neither to you or him any thing more than I really paid. I am unhappy that an idea should be entertain'd to the contrary.

Our packet sail'd the 6th instant for Charlestown, South Carolina, with a load of boards and spars. The Captain after the freighting season is over, has orders to sell her if a good market offers. We have wrote to Boston for insurance. If she should return here in the spring, I hope we shall have your permission to employ her in transporting our lumber to the West Indies, by which means we shall be enabled to continue any additional operations you may think necessary for the improvement of this country without any further addition to our funds.

The provisions and stores for Mariaville have gone round from this to Union River some time since, and unless the river is frozen up, they have arrived at the settlement.

By the next weeks mail I shall forward to Boston my draft on you for one thousand dollars, as mentioned in my letter of the 17th ultimo, which I hope you will honor.

I have no further information from Dr. Cony, only thro' my son in law Mr. Wilde at Hallowell, on whom I gave the Doctor a small credit. He has used a little of it, but I weekly expect his accounts. You must have observ'd in my instructions to Dr. Cony that I have not fixed any stipend for his services, but have left him to charge what he should think is an equivalent for them, altho I am sensible you have intimated your wish to have it otherwise; but being persuaded this mode will be far less expensive to you,

'till you establish a permanent system, I have adopted it. I presume that the Doctor's account for his services this year will not much exceed 100 dollars. This would certainly have been too trifling to have offer'd him as a stipend, yet in the form of an account he will consider it as an ample return for his attention. In estimating the amount of your expence at the Kennebeck this year I have no other data than Cony's last letter, wherein he mentions that the surveyors will finish two townships this fall. If this is done, it will probably amount to near 500 dollars, and the other expences for reconoitring for a road etc. with his own services cannot exceed from 150 to 200 dollars. I think you may calculate that the whole amount will not be more than between 6 and 700 dollars.

I omitted to mention that we are at no expence for the navigation of the packet, as she sails upon shares. Our only expence is the risk of the vessel and a part of the portage charges.

[No signature]

*Daniel Greely to Cobb and Richards, St. Stephens,
10 December 1800 [CP]*⁹

Honour'd Gentlemen:

Saint Stephens December 10th 1800

I take the libety to wright to you in forming you that the people in this place and Machias have a mied [mind?] for a road throw from the Uper Mills hear in this Scouduck River to Machias a crost the hight of the land. The distance is 35 m., and the road as it now goess is uperds of 60 miels, and as bad as bad can bee and never can be much better but a crost this way. Thair can be as good a road as any in this cuntry and cuts of half the distince.¹ I in formed the inhapetence of this place that Id some little acquaintance with you gentalmen and wood under take the bisness if you wood give any thing in reason for douing of it. The lands thay tell me exceed any in this cuntry for butey and goodness, and thir air sevrel in this place and Machias that wood stetle [*sic*] on them if thair wass but a road throw. The biger part of the people that now travel from hear to Machias goes this way. Thay tell me thay heave travel'd it in a bout eight hours. Firther moar thay air going to cut aroad throw to St. Johns a coming right out to theas mills. I will in gage to lay out and compleat a

⁹ This document is included as an example of frontier spelling at its finest. I have not been able to identify the author.

¹ The proposed road would have followed roughly the route of the Maine Central Railroad as it runs from Calais to Machias today.

road for teams and slays to pass by the fust of September next for any thing in reason and will not ask for any pay till compleated. I wish you to be good enuff to wright to me how it strickes you and if you think fitt, make to [?] me some perposels and I will come and see you and tell you firther about it. I wish you to wright as soon so that I might no how to plane my bisness. I will percuer two good bonsmen for my performance.

So I remember your goodness to me last fall when the Sloop of Conn. [?] left me at your house.

DANIEL GREELY

[Endorsed by Cobb]

On the subject of a new road from Schoodic to Machias, as only a part of this road passes thro' our lands, we have promis'd thus far, our proportion of the expence.

Fabrique to Cobb, Ellsworth, 16 December 1800 [CP]

Ellsworth December 16th. 1800

Sir:

I recived your favour dated the 10th of [torn] month with the invoice of the articles for the store at Mariaville. You observed in your letter that you thought I should have a bad time up the river, which was the case. The vessel did not get round untill Monday the first of the month, and on Tuesday and Wednesday, we was buting the ice and halling up the goods from Mr. Grunt [?].² On Thursday got a boat load over the falls and set off for Mariaville that night, and Friday night we got to Hapworth³ by brakeing about 3 or 3½ miles of ice that would beare four men to hall the batteau on and brake it down in order for the whale boat to follow, and on Saturday and borroughing Sunday and on Monday and Tuesday we got a [torn] to Webs Brook. Made a good logging sled and three [torn] and brot the oxen down from Webbs Brook, and on Wednesday set off for the [torn] best to cut [torn] road as I had [torn] provisions and axes, etc. on the spot, and it is much wanted as you may see hereafter. I then returned home and sent the rest of the oxen on and I expect they arrived there before the last storm. Expect to set off for the falls in the morning in good health and intend doing everything in my power for the benifit of thoes concerned, at all times. The winds blew and the flud came, beet upon our dam but it stood for it was founded upon a good

² This may have been Francis Grant, listed in the census of 1790 as living in Sullivan, or one of his family.

³ There is a Thomas Hapworth listed in the census of 1790 as living in Union River.

foundation. But poor Brimmers Dam on Pattons Bay went away by the flud⁴—a short sketch of a Roberson Cruso voyge.

I am, sir, your obedient humble servant

JOHN FABRIQUE

General David Cobb

[Postscript torn so badly as to be illegible]

Bingham to Cobb, Philadelphia, 31 December 1800 [CP]

Philadelphia December 31. 1800

Dear Sir:

I have received your two favors of the 17 ultimo and 10 instant. You mention in the former that you had received information from some country member that a motion was made in the legislature for an enquiry into the state of my contract, which for want of time was postponed untill the next session.

I think there must be some mistake on this subject, as I have received no hint of this nature from any other quarter, and surely General Knox, who is a member of the General Court, would have made known to me such an important piece of intelligence.

I always supposed that when I should require the deeds which remained in escrow would be the period when this subject would be agitated, and as I would wish to claim them as soon as possible, I was anxious that the legislature should be properly impressed, so as that a relaxation should take place with respect to their demands. I shall be thankful to you to take such measures of a preparatory nature as will lead to this result, and by corresponding with General Knox, you will probably be acquainted with the dispositions and views of the legislature, on this subject, should you not become a member of that body, which I understood there was a prospect of your being, at the next election.

I had received a letter of a similar import from the gentleman who wrote you on the subject of the Kennebec tract, and who wished to be employed in that business, but being divested of experience in regard to such operations, and being unacquainted with his private character, he had no claims to any encouragement on my part.

I observe that you have employed the packet in a southern voyage, which you suppose will be very profitable, and which you think would have been always the best destination for her in the winter season. You will recollect that she was originally purchased for the purpose of facilitating

⁴ George Brimmer of Ellsworth was agent for Leonard Jarvis.

the transportation of emigrants and their effects, which was the sole object we had in view, as relative to her establishment, as part of our system. As for employing vessels on trading voyages from Gouldsborough, it is altogether foreign to our purposes, as is everything else that departs from the idea of settling our lands and procuring settlers on them.

Neither can I believe that the settlements are to commence in the neighbourhood of Gouldsborough and progress from that spot. The interior of the lands must be penetrated, by the efforts of those who become the first settlers.

I shall most anxiously wait for the result of the advantages to be derived from the Mariaville settlement, concerning which you are so sanguine. I sincerely hope it will compensate the very heavy sums which have been expended thereon.

With respect to a credit on Mr. Codman, as expressed in your letter of the 10th instant, I always understood that it would not be necessary, but that by the diminution of your expences and the advantages of some available objects, you would be able to face all demands for the present year. I do not therefore recollect that any fixed credit was given on Mr. Codman.

Indeed my expenditures have been enormous and have subjected me to the greatest inconvenience.

To morrow I shall pay the last bond to Shaw, which will make the amount he has received for his Gouldsborough property \$20,357.80, not reckoning interest from the period of the respective payments.

And notwithstanding all these heavy disbursements, for property which I was advised to be cheap, and recommended to purchase at all events, there cannot be found with all our exertions any settlers or speculators who by buying any portion thereof will refund any part of the money advanced. Such is the miserable state of this concern, which I hope will soon experience a better fate.

The advances made to the tenant who has hired the mill are certainly very considerable and I cannot be persuaded that it is any part of our system to build mills, furnish capital to the tenant, and make trading voyages with the lumber, the produce of these mills. With respect to profits on West India voyages such as to furnish a capital for our operations and improvement, they may sometimes be produced. But I am sufficiently well acquainted with that trade to know that none but those who pursue the most rigid œconomy in all their disbursements, are eventually successful, and the knowledge of making such expenditures, which are essentially necessary, is not possessed by every merchant or seafaring man. Your ves-

sel was losing money in the coasting trade, whilst others must have been gaining.

From the mildness of the season, there is reason to believe that your stores and provisions have not been frozen up, in their way to the settlement on Union River, which probably would be a serious misfortune.

I lament exceedingly that you are under the necessity of making the additional draft of \$1,000, as I find it very inconvenient to raise such large sums.

However I hope we shall soon [have] a proper return for our numerous expenditures.

I have had several conversations with Mr. Merrick on the subject of improvements in the Kennebec country. I find him very intelligent, and as he has been engaged with persons who have possessed very scanty funds to support their operations, he seems to have discovered the means of making a little go a great way in the settlement of a new country. His plan very much resembles that which is adopted in the numerous settlements of this state, and which Colonel Pickering is about adopting.⁵

I request you to make my kind compliments to your family, as well as to Mr. and Mrs. Richards.

I have recently had an addition to my family by the birth of a son,⁶ of which I will thank you to inform my friend, Richards. To morrow I take my departure for the Federal City.

Yours sincerely
WM. BINGHAM

General Cobb
Gouldsborough

⁵ After the Revolution, Timothy Pickering had purchased lands in the Wyoming Valley in Pennsylvania. Now that he had resigned his position as Secretary of State, he was planning to develop his property there. He soon gave this plan up, however, and returned to his native state. See O. Pickering, *Life of Timothy Pickering*, II. 247-287; IV. 14-34.

⁶ For the birth of William Bingham, Jr., see M. L. Brown, "Mr. and Mrs. William Bingham," *Pa. Mag. of Hist. and Biog.*, LXI. 321.

Chapter XV

1801-1803

EIGHTEEN hundred was the last year during which Bingham's program for the development of his lands in Maine moved forward according to schedule. The beginning of the nineteenth century saw a series of misfortunes overtake the enterprise which were to stall its progress for more than twenty years. Unfortunately for David Cobb, the many obstacles to the eventual success of the speculation were just beginning to be overcome when he finished his term as agent. Thus his career as promoter of real estate down east ended in failure, just as the tide was turning.

However proud William Bingham may have been of his long-awaited son, born late in 1800, the child proved a bitter blessing. The infant's mother, Ann Willing Bingham, went on a sleighing party too soon after her son's birth, caught cold, and soon became seriously ill. In an effort to save her life, her distracted husband took her to Bermuda, though the presence on board the ship of a leaden coffin testified to the despair of her physicians. The beautiful Mrs. Bingham reached Bermuda just in time to die there, leaving her husband beside himself with grief.¹ On his return to Philadelphia he soon discovered that the many reminders of his wife that surrounded him rendered him incapable of work. Accordingly, he determined to accompany his daughter Ann and her husband, Alexander Baring, to England, where the newlyweds planned to establish themselves. Despite the fact that Bingham assured General Cobb that he would be able to direct the Maine operation from London, his absence from this country brought with it countless problems and seriously handicapped the development of the Maine property.²

As if this were not enough, Bingham's last days in America were made doubly unpleasant by what may best be called the

¹ For an account of Mrs. Bingham's death, see M. L. Brown, "Mr. and Mrs. Bingham," *Pa. Mag. of Hist. and Biog.*, LXI. 321. For Alexander Baring's account of these misfortunes, see A. Baring to F. Baring, 29 March and 12 May 1801, in BaP.

² See Bingham to Cobb, Philadelphia, 8 and 21 June 1801, in CP.

Cabot Suit. Bingham's own account of this unhappy litigation³ covers the subject thoroughly, and it now seems clear that he received a good deal less than justice at the hands of the clans of Essex County. When he left for England, he had a judgment of close to \$40,000 against him and was faced with the threat of having his Maine Lands attached to execute that judgment. Should this happen, either a large sum of money must be paid, or a large slice of the Kennebec tract would be gone forever. This vexatious business occupied a good part of the time of his agents, both in Philadelphia and in Maine, for the next three years.

Though it was certainly not so immediately menacing, the rise of Jeffersonian Democracy in Maine was to mean trouble for the landed proprietors in general and Bingham in particular.⁴ This problem did not become acute until after Bingham's death, but ominous rumblings were heard once the Republicans gained control of the federal government. The question of separation appeared again to divide the District roughly along party lines, with the Jeffersonians favoring separation, the Federalists clinging to the old Bay State.⁵ In the midst of this rising storm, David Cobb took a firm stand on the side of Federalism and property rights. Elected state senator in 1801, he was at once elected President of the Senate, and from this position, in the course of the next few years, he was able to help counteract the threat of squatter sovereignty in Maine.⁶ Believing that the courts of Hancock County needed strong leadership, he unwillingly accepted the position of Chief Justice of the Court of Common Pleas, and was thus able, from another vantage point, to fight for the Bingham interests in the dangerous days ahead.⁷

With Bingham far away in England, with his agents in Philadelphia confused as to what policy to pursue, with the Cabot Suit threatening dismemberment of the property, and with the Jacobins knocking at the gates, General Cobb could do little more

³ This account is printed below, pp. 1128-1138.

⁴ See W. A. Robinson, *Jeffersonian Democracy in New England*, especially 42-46.

⁵ See below, pp. 1142-1143, and pp. 1152-1154.

⁶ See below, p. 1177.

⁷ See Cobb's appointment as Chief Justice, dated 14 June 1803, in CP. There is also in CP an undated draft of Cobb's acceptance.

than mark time. He and John Richards attempted to carry on their program of developing settlements on the Penobscot tract, despite these discouragements. In 1801 the General could report that a little over \$11,000 worth of land had been contracted for, though, of course, only a small part of this sum had actually been received in cash.⁸ Two years later he actually received an offer for the Kennebec tract from some Boston capitalists, but the price was so absurdly low as to preclude acceptance.⁹ Still and all, it was a hopeful sign. But without the active direction of either Bingham or Baring and without adequate funds, the General could do little more than keep his fences repaired. It was but natural, therefore, that he should turn more and more to public affairs while he waited for those in charge to determine on what the next step should be.

Meanwhile a host of petty problems, personal and professional, continued to make demands on General Cobb's time. When a campaign to remove a corrupt judge in Hancock County was started, Cobb's aid was requested.¹ When a new missionary to the Indians was appointed, he came armed with a letter of introduction to the General.² When it was suggested that the Post Office at Gouldsborough be moved to a more convenient place, Cobb's opinion was solicited.³ When De la Roche died and his widow wanted an agent to superintend her property, General Cobb was offered, and accepted, the job.⁴ Letters from old friends—from Knox, from Jackson, from Eustis and the rest—occasionally brightened his otherwise drab existence, and his attendance at the General Court in Boston enabled him to renew old friendships.⁵ The needs of his large family were as demanding as ever.

⁸ See the document in CP entitled "Promises of Land in Sundry Towns" sent to Baring and dated Gouldsborough, 15 February 1801.

⁹ See Cobb to Hare, Castine, 29 June 1803, in CP and below, p. 1163.

¹ See John Lee to Cobb, Castine, 2 January 1801, in CP and below, pp. 1154-1155.

² See John Avery to Cobb, Boston, 28 July 1801, in CP.

³ See G. W. Granger to Cobb, Washington, 18 November 1802, in CP.

⁴ See Mason Shaw, Jr., to Cobb, Wrentham, 24 August 1801, and Cobb to Mason Shaw, Gouldsborough, 22 September 1801, both in CP.

⁵ Henry Jackson kept up a fairly regular correspondence, but there is in CP only one letter from Knox and one from Eustis during this period.

When Eunice Wilde fell sick, her husband must ask the General's medical advice.⁶ Son Henry embarked on a naval career, as a midshipman aboard the U.S.S. *Constitution*, but soon left the service.⁷ George was sent to the Wildes for schooling at Hallowell Academy.⁸ And the eldest son, Thomas, remained his father's right hand man at Gouldsborough.⁹

Thus, as the nineteenth century opened, Cobb's prospects were anything but bright. His best hope was to try to hold his own and trust that the future would have better things in store.

*Cobb to Bingham, Gouldsborough, 27 January 1801 [CP]*¹

Honorable William Bingham

Gouldsboro' January 27th. 1801

Dear Sir:

Inclosed you will receive our accounts for the last season.² To correct some small errors in our accounts of the two preceeding years, and to make this more plain and intelligible, we have united the amounts of those years with the present, that you might have in one view the whole of our proceedings with the expence of the several departments and the total of receipts.

As it may afford you some satisfaction, I will make a few explanatory observations on our several departments as they appear on the accounts.

Gouldsboro' Packet. This measure has not been attended with the immediate profit that I wish'd and expected, and the reasons of it are now to me very plain. The captain and crew, who receive monthly wages and subsistence, are not interested either in making their trips with expedition and œconomy, or disposing of the cargo's to the best market. Thence we are exposed to a great expence from the indolence and extravagance of our navigators and the vilanous impositions of the lumber yards at Boston.

⁶ See Wilde to Cobb, Hallowell, 5 February 1801, and Cobb to Wilde, Gouldsborough, 3 March 1801, both in CP.

⁷ See Jackson to Cobb, Boston, 15 April 1801, and Cobb to Robert Smith, Secretary of the Navy, Boston, 1 April 1803, requesting his son's release. Both letters are in CP.

⁸ See below, p. 1143.

⁹ See, for example, two letters in CP from Thomas Cobb to Cobb, dated Castine, 24 September and 7 October 1803, which show Thomas active in legal affairs in Hancock County.

¹ There is a photostatic copy of this letter in William Bingham Letters, 1795-1803, 107-102A, at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

² There is a copy of these accounts in CP.

Others who persue this business on shares make large returns for the vessel and crew, and from this circumstance I formerly calculated that a good profit would result from this measure. However the object of keeping up a communication between this place and Boston has been answer'd and thereby the reputation and value of the country has certainly been increas'd. No loss has accrued, and the packet is now worth as much, or more, as when purchas'd, with which sum this department is ballanced.

Surveying Department. About two hundred dollars will yet when receiv'd pass to the credit of this department, and in justice the five dollars receiv'd from each settler should likewise pass to the same credit, as the intention of government in fixing this sum was only to repay the proprietor the survey of the settlers lot. This however has always been credited to the townships in which the settlers lot is. The experience of operating in new countries has determin'd that this department will ultimately be the most expensive of any.

Road Cutting Department. This is important in the settlement of all new countries, but in future it will be only occasional and to no great amount.

Home Building Department. The expences of this department have been heavy, but by no means unnecessary, if it was intended that this country should be inhabited by any others than copper and white savages, and the department is ballanc'd by the actual cost of the buildings. There will be little or no expence in this department in future.

Annsburgh Settlement. It is difficult to say what would be [the] value of this settlement now (as there is yet but little value to landed property here), but I should presume it is good for what it has cost if we never obtain any part of the debt due from the occupier. This, however, we shall probably obtain. Indeed it would be wrong, at present, to put this settlement, or any other we should make for like purposes, at a less price than what it cost (altho', in this instance we have carried to loss the salary we gave this settler for his first years residence there), for our object in making this interior settlement was to form a kind of nucleus, around which settlers would gather, and if in the event the greater part of a township should be sold and settled thereby, the first cost of the operation would deserve a much higher estimate. One settler has already taken his lot adjoining to this settlement, and altho our occupier is a poor devil, yet we have one consolation under this misfortune, that he has a large family of eight boys, some nearly of age, all of whom will probably settle in that country.

Saw Mill No. 1 in Gouldsboro. This mill you purchas'd of Shaw being very

old and worn out. The first year I came here I put some small expence upon it and in the fall I rented it for the insuing year at 100 dollars, for which I gave you credit in 1796. At the expiration of this lease, as the mill was too bad to repair, I contracted to have it rebuilt with a new dam, for which I gave the use of the old mill for 1797 and four hundred dollars. The mill was finish'd in April 1798 and we leas'd it for one year for 300 dollars, part of which is now due as per account. Since April 1799 we have taken the mill into our own hands, and the business is done on shares, by which means we receive immediately our proportion of the boards and the log rent. If there were persons in this country in whom the least confidence could be placed, the mill business would be attended with very great advantages.

Saw Mill No. 2 in No. 7, Middle Division. This mill is on the same stream and only one mile and a half above the one in Gouldsboro. I purchas'd this mill in the winter of 1796 and 97 for 550 dollars, and it was under rent from March 1797 for one year at 200 dollars, for which you had credit in my private accounts for 1798. It was again leas'd for 220 dollars 'till March 1799, the greater part of which is now due as per account. This mill since the last mentioned period has been occupied as the preceeding one.

Saw Mill No. 3, Annsburgh. This mill was unfortunate the last year by having its dam distroy'd in part by the flood and which could not be repair'd 'till after the period for sawing was over. It is now repair'd and we hope the next season to receive something from it. We have now indeed about 20 or 30 M of boards there, but as they were not disposed of, they are not carried to the credit of this mill. The amount of this account is what the mill cost.

Saw Mill No. 4. This is Mariaville where there is a large double saw mill built this year, and which will commence working on the opening of the spring. This amount shows the expence of the mill.

Mariaville Settlement—only shews the advances we have as yet made to this settlement. Our agent there has other demands that have not come forward for building a house, for forage for the cattle, for chains, sleds, etc.

Settlement No. 23, Middle Division. This is an advance we have made for bringing forward this interior settlement. It is ultimately to be repaid and we hope to have it attended with an accession of settlers.

Union River Mill. We have a deed of this mill, which is at the settlement

near the mouth of the river. We took it as security for a loan to the amount mentioned which we found necessary to make to our contractor who built Mariaville Mills. It is on interest, and we have agreed to the sale of this mill for 2,300 dollars, to be paid in 6 and 12 months. The surplus beyond our loan and interest will revert to the contractor, now our agent at Mariaville.

Township of Gouldsboro', Townships, Wharf. These several subjects require no particular observations.

Timber Rents. This is the first of our receipts in this department. By a schedule inclosed you will see the sums still due from some of our agents as far as we have receiv'd returns.

Sundry Expenses. The sum under this head paid to Judge Sullivan is for his account in full for the Trenton cause which was decided the last year.³ This sum with all the former advances for fees in this case I have made out an account against the Town of Trenton and which I presume they will repay. When receiv'd, the sum of \$63.33 will pass to the credit of this department as a part of what has been receiv'd as timber rents ought now to be. But not knowing from our returns what proportion had been receiv'd for the former prosecutions at Union River, the whole has been credited as timber rents. It is further to be noted, that all the different utensils we have here for the use of the concern, have been charged to this department.

Store. One of the evils that lessened the profits of the packet has likewise operated here—the price of lumber at Boston. In future this evil will be remedied, but I think it would be prudent to gradually lessen the capital of this department and devote it to other objects, leaving however sufficient to negotiate all our supplies to the department and the settlers.

Cash. This requires no comment.

Profit and Loss. This exhibits the sums that may be said to be lost, as well as those gain'd by our different operations.

Stock. Time must determine whether the several subjects here exhibited as stock will turn out equal the value estimated. It is the price they several cost, and I sincerely hope that your future returns from them may equal your expectations.

I have been so employ'd in reviewing our accounts that I have not given you a letter since the 10th ultimo.

³ For the Trenton case, see above, p. 994.

By the next post we shall forward a statement of all the lands we have promis'd to settlers in the different townships, with the prices for which they were engaged.

The accounts I have put under a separate cover, as with this letter I suspect they would exceed the limits of your frank.

I am, dear sir, with esteem,
etc. etc.
D. C.

Cobb to Wilde, Gouldsborough, 1 February 1801 [CP]

Dear Wilde:

Gouldsboro' February 1st. 1801

It is a long time since I heard from you altho' I have frequently heard of you, sometimes as an elector⁴ high on the ladder, at other times moving in a more humble, but much the most profitable, station at the Bar. In whatever sphere you move in you have always my best wishes for success. Take care however that you mix not too much unprofitable ambition in your desires for elevation.

It seems the political die is cast and the events of our country, in future, rest with God. Ben Russell's folks at Boston appear to be advocates for Burr. He has more ambition than Molock and more avarice than Char-
ters.⁵ Jefferson with all his faults is best. The most painfull part of this business is the joy express'd by the party in their success, for their management of the government will not, cannot, be essentially different from the past. We are too young, we have too much property, and that too much defused, to admit of successfull rebellions by disorganizers, however the son culottes of our country may wish it. Dearborn must have burst forth with great joy on this occasion with his advocates around you.⁶ I presume my friend Ben. V. is too prudent to say anything. You will present me to him and his family very successfully.

What is the situation of my Androscoggin lands? I think it best not to dispose of any of them at present, and if possible prevent all trespassers. This property situated in so thick a settlement cannot be of less value than 4 dollars per acre, if trespassers can be prevented.

How will stand my senatorial business with you? If their is no proba-

⁴ Wilde had been a presidential elector in the election of 1800 and had presumably voted for Adams.

⁵ Francis Charteris was a famous eighteenth-century criminal in England. He amassed a large fortune through blackmail and other nefarious practices.

⁶ Henry Dearborn was the leading Jeffersonian politician in Maine.

bility of success I should rather withdraw my name. Old Campbell⁷ is still a[n]xious to go another year, and I suppose another and another, and the Washington people will vote for him and for me, which I do not like. This county will probably vote for me. I am not anxious in this business and I wish your direction. Thomas has improv'd this delightfull winter in a visit to Kennebeck. By him we intended to forward you a Gouldsboro' cheese, but he tho't himself and his baggage enough for his pony. The cheese however will be the better for keeping, and when you do get it I shall insist that it is only used on extraordinary occasions of friends and company, and that you inform them it is an English cheese made at my dairy in Gouldsboro' where any quantity of the like may be obtain'd on paying well for them.

We are all well, and have no other complaint than indolence and the want of good society. Our best and affectionate remembrances to Eunice and the children.

[No signature]

Ross to Cobb, Union River, 3 February 1801 [CP]

Dear Sir:

Union River 3d February 1801

Your polite favor of the 28th ultimo I was honored with on the 29th. I have returned to my meat and tod and begin to gather strength. I [torn] sleigh rider, am very happy to hear that Mr. Richards has [torn] to his estate, and tho' you brag of your women turning out boys as fast and as easy as tinkers cast spoons, yet our women here beat yours all hollow. Doctor Payson⁸ in the course of the last ten days has almost killed an excellent horse in the service, and in one twenty four hours took three lusty boys—so that 'tis more like shelling pease on our side the county.

Fabrique I thought kept you regularly informed of his motions. You ask where he lives. Mariaville or Ellsworth. The latter is his town residence, where he has past the most part of the present winter. I believe he has to this day not hauled one log. At least such is the complexion of the best information on the subject that I can procure. Am a little apprehensive he is of the class of exotics that rich luxurious soils don't well suit. You will be a better judge next June or July on an examination and eclairsment of accounts.

⁷ This was Alexander Campbell of Narraguagus, who had been state senator from eastern Maine for many years.

⁸ James Payson, first physician in what is now Ellsworth. See A. H. Davis, *History of Ellsworth*, 21.

William Bingham's Maine Lands

I think it now my duty to say something of my own business. I have been attempting (before my face) to create a fund for you in the hands of Peters and Pond. It does not yet exceed seventy dollars, however rest assured that I have good securities for a handsome little fund which by the last of May will be in a state of requisition. Not only that, but as man is frail and myself in particular most ticklishly brittle, I think *entre nous* it will be best to have a looking over and settlement of the business confided to my care, when I hope by a candid and fair statement, payment and settlement, to give my very honorable friends Messrs. Cobb and Richards due satisfaction, to whom I look upon myself under many and very sensible obligations.

Am too shattered a piece of furniture to bear a jaunt to Goldsborough this winter. Yet as you want somebody to help you to return thanks, as I generally when I put up my humble supplications for myself do the same for my benefactors, it perhaps will do as well. With mine and wifes best regards to you and your good family,

I am with much esteem and respect,

Dear sir, your most obedient servant

DONALD ROSS

Honorable David Cobb, Esquire
Goldsborough

'Tis now one oclock at night. I have been bored since six till this moment by a fellow who is prosecuted for crim con., and I, to be sure, must try to keep him out of the nobble. Its cost him already \$300, and I must be paid for this nights tedium. I mention this that you may account for the many blun in my [torn]

*Cobb to Bingham, Gouldsborough, 11 February 1801 [CP]*⁹

William Bingham, Esquire
Dear Sir:

Gouldsboro' February 11th. 1801

The inclosed will afford you a view of the quantity and price of the land we have engaged to purchasors in the different townships. The greater part is on interest since January 1st. 1799, and some before that period.

I have receiv'd your two letters of November 24th and December

⁹ There is a photostatic copy of this letter in William Bingham Letters, 1795-1803, 103A-104A, at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania. There is a copy of the statement mentioned in this letter in CP. It shows that the agents had "promised" something over 7,000 acres at prices which would total something over \$11,000.

31st. Dr. Cony has been inform'd of your directions, and I have request-ed him not to proceed in surveying, road making or any thing else untill he hears further from you or me. Within a few days past I have receiv'd a letter from him, wherein he mentions that the two townships are compleated with their plans and field notes, and that one half of the survey bill will be paid for in land at 1\$ per acre within those townships. This circumstance is sufficient to shew you what I have heretofore observ'd, that this country is in a state of settlement of itself.

The information which I some time since communicated to you, and which I receiv'd from a member of our legislature, you may depend upon its being correct, your not receiving it from any other source notwithstanding.¹ General Knox did not attend the last session of the legislature; he is now however with the present sessions, and if the subject is again bro't forward, you will, thro' him no doubt, be inform'd of it. My distance is so great from Boston, and our communication by post is only once in a fortnight, and that uncertain, that I cannot afford to you the assistance I wish in this business.

I sincerely congratulate you on the birth of your son and you have my best wishes that you may realize all that happiness and pleasure that you naturally anticipate from such an event.

I am, dear sir, with esteem

D. C.

Cobb to Bingham, Gouldsborough, 7 April 1801 [CP]

Gouldsborough April 7th 1801

William Bingham, Esquire

Dear Sir:

My last letter was of the 2d. ultimo. The last I have received of yours was of the 31st. of December past.

Our last winter was remarkably moderate. We had but little snow and that of short continuance, thence the lumbering business of the country has fell short near one half of the usual quantity. This circumstance with the great demand for boards for the West India market has rais'd that article from 6 to 10 dollars per M. Our Mariaville establishment has largely pertook of this general deficiency. This however only deprives us of a part of that immediate profit that was contemplated from it, as it will have no effect in retarding the progress of the settlement. Four families of western farmers are expected in the course of the next month to

¹ This was the report that the subject of Bingham's settling duties had been brought up in the Massachusetts legislature.

commence their improvements in the neighbourhood of this establishment.

Mr. Richards went for Boston about ten days since, where I suppose he intends making some further arrangements in his business of shipping lumber from this port. Before his departure he mentioned that if he should continue the lumber trade from this port, he should be fond of purchasing the five acre lot at the south western corner of this Point, where he intends building a store and wharf for his accommodation, and that he would pay the original sum that was given to Shaw for it, that is ten pounds per acre. He would likewise wish to purchase the saw mill in this town, if the price could be made agreeable. On this subject Mr. Richards will probably communicate his intentions to Mr. Baring before he returns from Boston. On this subject I shall wish your directions.

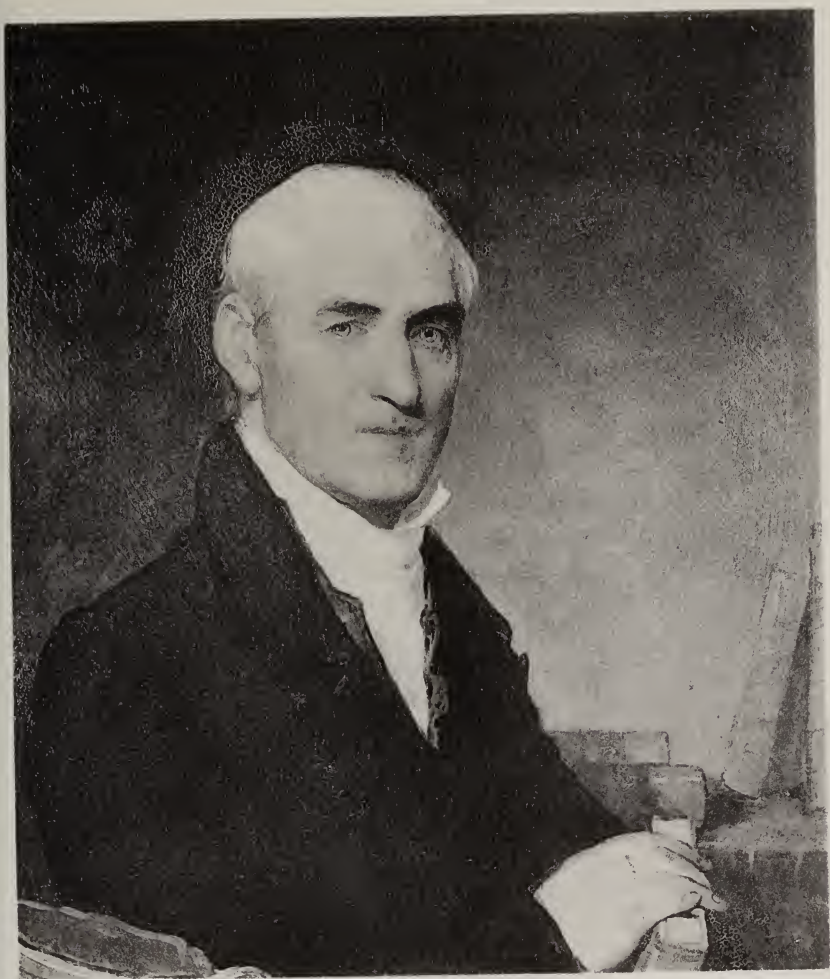
The last intelligence we had from the packet was of the 2d February. She was then at Charleston, South Carolina, on the freighting business. If she is not disposed of, she will probably return to this place by the middle of next month, when she will be loaded with lumber and sent to Boston for sale. Such vessels are at present high at market.

I hope we shall not have occasion to trouble you with any of our drafts the ensuing season. We estimate our funds to be adequate to our contemplated improvements.

I have lately receiv'd a letter from Doctor Cony,² in which is the following paragraph.

I am lately inform'd that a Mr. Merrick, a connection of the Vaughan family, is soliciting the agency of Mr. Bingham's landed concerns on this river. Whether Mr. Charles Vaughan is to be a copartner in this business I am not inform'd, altho' from some conversation with him the last fall, I am confident he wishes it. Perhaps it is not exaggeration to remark that there is not probably a family on the globe more fond of experimenting and of novel revolutionary ideas, of dabbling in almost every kind of business, say Plymouth Company matters, tontine buildings, canals, land speculations, navigation, agricultural societies, India trade, turnpikes, phisic, brick machines, bridges, bank stock, Society to Direct Foreigners, aquaducts, etc. etc. etc. Quere: Will all these things qualify a man the better to promote Mr. Bingham's views and objects in bringing forward the sale and settlement of his lands on the Kennebeck? I have steadily kept in view that thro' your assistance I should be able to promote those objects in all their various relations as well as any man in this country, and I will not suspect my own understanding so much as to believe my experience,

² The original letter is Cony to Cobb, Augusta, 14 March 1801, in CP.



Judge Daniel Cony of Augusta
Sub-Agent for William Bingham's Kennebec Tract
Portrait by Gilbert Stuart

knowledge and acquaintance with landed concerns to be inferior to any other person in this part of the government, and I indulge a hope that my reputation will be found a sufficient pledge for an honorable, œconomical and upright execution of any instructions that may be confided.

The Doctor's letter containing this paragraph was written to me in confidence, and I must request the same injunction.

It would have been particularly pleasing to me to have had some method pointed out by which I could receive the land I am entitled to by contract. It would be highly to your interest as well as mine, and I sincerely hope it will not be longer delay'd.

[No signature]

Cobb's letters to Bingham quite naturally attempted to present the condition of the Maine speculation in the best possible light. Indeed the General had no choice; were the program for the development of the lands abandoned, his agency might well be given up and he would find himself in desperate straits. Thus he made every effort to emphasize the encouraging and minimize the discouraging aspects of the enterprise. John Richards, though he too was committed to the concern, was much more given to calling a spade a spade. The following report which he wrote to the Hopes is probably a much more objective analysis of just how things were going than are Cobb's more sanguine accounts.

Richards to Hope and Company, Gouldsb rough, 7 June 1801 [BaP]

Messrs. Hope and Company
Gentlemen,

Gouldsborough 7th June 1801

Altho I have not much to say in the communication of which I hope to give you pleasure, I feel it incumbent on me to forward to you a few lines on the opening of the season.

There would be little occasion to remark that the progressive advance of our concern is far less rapid and satisfactory than could be desired by any of the parties in it, were it not for the purpose of explaining why the operations of this year are intended to be on a scale more limited than heretofore. Yet tho' we are contracting the force of our operating power, I consider it by no means prudent to withhold it altogether, for by the gen-

eral circulation of such an opinion the property would receive a check, more prejudicial than our exertions have been serviceable, giving thereby a publicity to the failure of our schemes, and confirming the former very unfavourable opinion of this country.

Our business this year will be confined to:

Housebuilding. Some little work is here required, say to the amount of \$300 or \$400, and one of our carpenters hitherto employ'd, having become a resident here, we have as an inducement to him given him this work occasionally to keep him in employ.

Road Cutting. We propose opening a road from Mariaville to a settlement 8 miles westward which communicates with the Penobscot. Some bridges are required on our former roads.

Surveying. Some few towns, viz. Eden on Mount Desert, No's. 8 and 9, No's. 11 and 12, Middle Division,³ being partially occupied by squatters or people under promise, we intend to have some or most of them run out.

Store and Packet. The former is neither that engine of reform to the country I had hoped for; nor is it so profitable as to induce its continuance. We shall therefore lessen the stock by degrees. The latter has returned from the southward with much worse success than we had hoped, owing to the sickness of the crew, the Captain having been laid up two months with a violent fever, of which also the Mate (our former Captain) died. She does not however make a losing voyage and is now going to Boston for sale. Whether we shall purchase a smaller one is doubtful; to be without one entirely will be extremely inconvenient both in a general and personal view.

Mills. The price of lumber having risen, those under our immediate inspection will do tolerably well. At Mariaville we shall be disappointed.

Settlements. These require some attention. The settler at No. 23 (Beddington) not being so capable a farmer as we understood, we have been obliged in some measure to take the management of it into our own hands; hitherto the season has been remarkably favourable. At Annsburgh and Beddington we have four families established who reside there altogether and appear to live comfortably. This takes off the horrors of the wilderness and will soon be the means of bringing others on.

In consequence of our advertisements of offering liberal encouragement to the first settlers who would take up lands on Union River, we have had some few applicants. They have, however, all returned satisfied with the land but without coming to any positive decision, altho' the of-

³ The present towns of Hancock, Franklin, Cherryfield, and Columbia.

fers we have made were the same as detailed in my letter of the 27 January to the settler in No. 23. If further proofs were required of the difficulty in inducing settlers to come on at a distance from the borders of emigration, their not embracing eagerly such liberal offers would, I think, be conclusive. How great is the difference between a country which only required to have townships run out and roads cut to settle rapidly and the fact that people hesitate in considering a loan sufficient for their maintenance for three years, a compensation for removing so far into the wilderness!

It would be a needless repetition⁴ to give my reasons why I think the advance of this country will be slow and gradual, and why I conceive a length of time must be given to reap the harvest of settling and cultivating a country. It is more than ever my fix'd opinion that this will ultimately prove an advantageous speculation, but that the period of winding it up will not arrive for a great many years.

What effect peace and a dispersion of the American capital now employ'd in commerce may have on the value of lands, I do not calculate upon; my opinions are derived from the experience I have acquired.

As the question may possibly arise, why should Mr. Richards continue in so unprofitable a situation? I am free to confess my own private reasons with hopes of your pardon for the egotism: that unless I had some hopes and prospects of turning the export of lumber to account from a residence here, I should notwithstanding the object of my salary cast my thoughts towards engaging in some other occupation which might prove a source of reward before I felt the decline of life.

I am, Gentlemen, with sentiments of respect and esteem,

Your very obedient and humble servant

JOHN RICHARDS

Richards to Cobb, Gouldsborough, 8 June 1801 [CP]

Dear General: Gouldsboro' the 8 June. 1801

Such few occurrences have happened since my last per R. Shaw, that I fear the present will be full of Sir Lucius O'Trigger's great scarcity of materials.⁵ The packet is not loaded so soon as I expected which being no novelty scarce deserves notice. It does not appear however that the present

⁴ This indicates that Richards must have corresponded regularly with the Hopes. Unfortunately, this letter is the only one of his reports in BaP until a much later period.

⁵ Sir Lucius O'Trigger was a character in Sheridan's *The Rivals*.

skipper is more dilatory than poor David⁶ used to be. She takes all the boards we had at the Eastern Bay landing and some few from the Western Bay etc., say in all 17 M and compleats her hold with joists. On deck I have put a timber and about 4 or 5 M spruce sheathing stuff for Joseph Russell,⁷ of which I will write him word. I sincerely hope she will sell well, and if vessels have not fallen in price, your being upon the spot will of course help her off. You will follow your own opinion whether it will be better to paint her a little, for she is very shabby at present. Our spare cordage will go with her. I am at a loss what to say about the purchase of another vessel. It will be inconvenient to be without any, but will not the *Ruby* do at present, and by waiting a few months may not vessels fall, and we purchase to greater advantage? If you take another in part payment whoever understands vessels best and is sharpest at a bargain will gain the advantage, and to give a handsome credit to this sale, the other vessel may appear a dear purchase. By selling and buying with cash we shall obviate this.

If you see Mr. Barrell⁸ do speak to him about the families he mentioned to me, and see whether there was any thing serious in his application, or whether he was only pumping.

Pray mention particularly what you wish me to do with Tillinghast. Further discoveries appear against him, and I think of writing to Nelson for a writ in case he refuses to come to a settlement.

If you see Mr. J. C. Jones remember me to him, and state the particulars of the situation of the mill seat in No. 22. They are as follows. A mill was erected there about 19 or 20 years since by one Farnsworth who conveyed his claim thereto and to 100 acres land to a Mr. Lovett of Annapolis Royal. Farnsworth left it about 13 or 14 years ago, since when no person has resided on it. Judge Jones thinks Farnsworth is not mentioned as a squatter. Do give your opinion to Mr. Jones on the subject and it may be well to hint that if land, when it begins to settle, is not worth the expence of running out, it is never to be expected to bear a value.⁹

The weather since you went has been very variable. At noon the thermometer has been once at 80 since your departure, and at the same time of day at 46.

⁶ David Godfrey, the former captain of the packet.

⁷ This was presumably Quaker Joe Russell, a friend of Cobb's. See R. H. Gardiner, *Early Recollections*, 106.

⁸ This was probably Joseph Barrell of Boston, who had bought a large number of tickets in the land lottery of 1786. See above, p. 712, note 8.

⁹ The census of 1790 lists an Isaac Farnsworth as living in No. 22, the present Jonesboro, and an Isaac Lovett as living in No. 5, the present Harrington.

If the day is fine tomorrow I purpose going up to Beal's,¹ for I conclude they have had a noble burn. Fabrique I am told has broken his crank. I have therefore engaged Bacon² to take over our spare one for him to Mr. Ross's. Will you therefore be good enough to procure for us—

2 Cranks

1½ dozen Nob Letches

1. dozen Thumb Letches

3 barrels Bread

2 dozen Men's good leather Shoes

I went to Boston unprovided with a list of seeds for my garden which I selected from Bingham's gardening book. Possibly you may be able to procure them for me at Whites, unless you hear that any of them will not grow. Else, I should like to try them. Next year will do to sow them if this is too late, tho' the worms have committed such havock that we are *all* sowing our gardens afresh entirely.

Seeds as follows—

Sorrel

Corn Sallad or Lamb's Lettuce

Chervil

Rape

Burnet

Tarragon

Shalots

Lavender

Rosemary

Borage

Please also to send me a barrel flour and to pay my arrears at J. Russell's *Gazette* and a quarter or two in advance.

[No signature]

*Cobb to Bingham, Taunton, 29 June 1801 [BP]*³

Dear Sir:

Taunton June 29th. 1801

Under all the afflictions which it is the lot of man to participate of in this world, nothing so affectually contributes to the peacefull conciliation of the mind, as perfect silence on the subject. You will therefore per-

¹ I believe Beal was one of the settlers at either the Mariaville or the Beddington settlement. The census of 1790 lists two Beals as residing in No. 22 (Jonesboro) and one on Union River.

² There is a Thomas Bacon listed in the census of 1790 as living in Gouldsborough.

³ There is an almost identical copy of this letter in CP.

mit me only to say, that I sincerely sympathize with you on the late melancholy event that has taken place in your family.

You have no doubt observ'd that I am a member of the legislature of this Commonwealth; my situation there, and the late death of my brother requiring my earliest attendance here, has prevented my attention to your commands as contain'd in your letter of the 8th. instant, but as I shall return in the course of this week to Boston, that business shall then be executed.

As it is not probable I shall return to Gouldsboro' under a fortnight or three weeks from this, I shall wish to receive your directions about the Kennebeck lands. How are deeds to be given to the surveyors for their services as engaged by Dr. Cony? How are the settlers who are entitled to land, as well as those who purchase, to receive their deeds? I am much solicited on this subject. Whether you wish me to return by that way, to adjust with Dr. Cony his account for the last year, and put in train for execution any other of your directions. I have likewise to request your permission to draw for 500\$ in part of my ensuing annual stipend. My private loan accounts shall be forwarded before I leave Boston.

The subject that I heretofore mentioned to you, that a motion had been made in the legislature respecting your contracts with the government, has been explain'd at the late session, and a Resolve has passed⁴ requiring Jackson and Flint to release to the Commonwealth, within six months, all their right to the *back Million* or 2,900,000 acres which they contracted for, and on failure, the Attorney General is directed to prosecute their bonds for 5,000\$ now in the Treasury, which bond was given for the performance of the contract. It seems that 5,000\$ were to be paid within thirty days after the contract was signed by the parties (this sum has been paid), and a bond was then given for 5,000\$ more conditioned for the faithfull performance of the contract. This is the bond that is order'd to be prosecuted if a release is not executed agreeably to the Resolution. If it is, the bond will be given up.⁵

I am, dear sir,

With esteem

Your obedient servant

DAVID COBB

⁴ This resolve was passed 19 June 1801.

⁵ Jackson was placed in a difficult position by this resolve. He had neither the means nor the wish to fulfill the terms of the back tract contract. On the other hand, he feared that he might render himself liable to suit by Bingham if he gave up the contract without the latter's express direction. Bingham formally renounced all interest in the contract in his letter to Cobb dated Philadelphia, 1 August 1801, in CP. For the final settlement of this business, see below, p. 1223, note 4.

Bingham to Cobb, Philadelphia, 30 June 1801 [CP]

Philadelphia June 30th 1801

Dear General:

I have already acknowledged receipt of your favors of the 27 January, February 11, March 2, and April 7, tho I have not, from reasons already adduced, made any particular reply to them.

Your first letter was accompanied by your accounts, which bring into one point of view your expenditures for the years 1798, 1799, and 1800, not comprehending those of a previous date, nor including the agents expences. My accounts relative to disbursments for the settlement of these lands are closed every six months and they amount with interest thereon from the 1 February 1796 (the date of Mr. Baring's purchase) to \$27,282.30, besides which, there were upwards of \$4,000 previously expended, to which must be added Mr. Baring's moiety of expences, which will make the sum total amount to little less than \$60,000, from which, in order to ballance this account, is to be deducted the value of the objects on hand, at their real value. The difference will constitute the actual expences attending the settlement and improvement, which will form a very large sum, to constitute a plea in favor of relaxing on the part of the legislature, the demand for settling duties. Your seat in the legislature will enable you to make proper impressions on this subject, and I think may be made very instrumental in obtaining a favorable liquidation of this business. I congratulate you on your appointment as President of the Senate—but what will be the effect, as relative to the necessity of a constant attendance on that body, and how will such a necessary absence from home interfere with your other pursuits and engagements?

I suppose the care of the store is well attended to during your journies to Boston. This establishment has greatly disappointed us, with respect to the profits it would produce. From the great advance, usually obtained on the sale of articles in a young country, where labor is excessively high, we expected the returns would have been very large, and thereby counterballance in a great measure our heavy expenditures for the hire of labourers, for a country must be in a very active state of settlement, so as to insure the receipt of funds from the sale of lands, in order to justify the heavy advances that are made for improvements in order to prepare it for the reception of settlers.

Your experience will determine how far such objects have been, or are likely to be obtained by the disbursements we have already made. I observe that you have engaged to dispose of about 8,000 acres of land in different districts, but you do not mention whether the payments are at

short or at long periods. I hope these sales will be more frequent and progressively make us returns for the heavy advances of purchase and settlement. It would have been satisfactory to us to have had the various items which constitute the expences under the different heads as you have arranged them, in the manner you commenced your accounts, previous to Mr. Baring's purchase. Mr. Black could easily make a transcript from the books, but they must be forwarded by some private hands, as I suppose they would be rather bulky.

Surveying is so simple a business that I suppose you would not find it difficult to procure a settler who understood it, and who would reside in some convenient place, where you might command his services. He might be paid as occasionally employed, and probably might be induced to take land for his services.

I hope the packet will be successfull in her southern voyage, but I much doubt whether she will sell for as much as the price you have valued her at. I observe the great scarcity of lumber arising from the very moderate winter, and the consequent advance in the price of this article. Should you have had any large quantity on hand, you will benefit, thereby, altho I find our mills will sustain an injury from the deficiency of logs. Whenever a peace takes place, this article will greatly rise, as the demand will be immensely great for the supply of the West India market, in order to reinstate the islands.

I hope our housebuilding expences have finished. This is an item, of no great account, in the settlement of new countries.

It augurs very ill for our interior settlements, when you are under the necessity of giving a salary of \$450 for a years residence of a settler, after having made expensive improvements and furnished stock, at Annsburgh Settlement.

I hope our mills will prove productive and furnish a full consideration for their cost. Much depends upon the industry and integrity of the persons you employ to superintend them.

In your letter accompanying your accounts, you make no remarks on the subject of the settlement at No. 23, which has involved an expence of \$848.47.

However it gives me great pleasure to observe that you have brought this business to such a state as to have no occasion for any further requisitions for money, as it would have been extremely inconvenient to me to have made any further advances.

I have received the returns of survey made under the direction of Dr. Coney, for the two townships of the Kennebec lands. From the indica-

tions of the quality of the lands, which he has annexed thereto, it appears that they are exceedingly valuable. I have before mentioned that I am not disposed to enter into any extensive plan of settlement, which would necessarily involve expence, altho I have no objections to accommodating such a number of settlers as are inclined to form their establishments on these lands, specifying by written obligations the terms on which they agree to become purchasers, which are to be complied with when they receive their deed. I think such sales, especially if made at handsome prices, would give an importance and value to these lands in the general estimation and would thereby facilitate the object I have in view, that of disposing of a portion, if I cannot sell the whole tract. I have waited with great impatience for the value of these lands to rise in the public opinion, which I believe has been somewhat effected. This was necessary, previous to the adoption of measures to urge a sale without making an immense sacrifice, and that such a sale had become very urgent you will readily judge, after informing you that the purchase of these lands on the half yearly settlement, terminating on this day, amounts for monies absolutely expended to the sum of \$539,426.50, from which is to be deducted the sales made to Mr. Baring with interest thereon. The ballance, which is an advance of money, forms an immense sum, which is independent of the expences of settlement, and some other charges. I am well persuaded that these lands, from their local situation and intrinsic value, can be readily settled, but I am apprehensive that it will be difficult to impress these ideas upon others who may have received different accounts. This induces me to wish you to communicate to me, all information you may receive or can collect, relative to the Kennebec lands, their soil, situation, facility of settlement, general estimation they are held in, after being examined, their vicinity to settlements already made and other local and peculiar advantages. I would thank you to address this information to me in such a manner as would serve as a document to exhibit to such persons as made enquiries, on whom I would wish to impress, on this subject.

It is of the most essential importance to the concern that the prejudices which have been entertained concerning these lands should be eradicated as soon as possible, which I think may be easily effected, as I am informed from every quarter of their intrinsic goodness and the truth must at last prevail.

I wish your settlements had originally commenced in this quarter, being from various reasons, much more susceptible of a rapid progress, than the tract which now occupies our attention.

I find Dr. Coney not very friendly to Mr. Merricks pretensions as an agent for settling these lands.

I have never made him any proposals on the subject, but from several conversations I have had with him, I cannot but acknowledge that I derived very important information from him, concerning this country, its population and resources, as well as æconomical mode of settling it. He is a sensible, intelligent man, and speaks in most cases from experience, altho it may not be adviseable, from particular reasons, to employ him as an agent.

I hope great attention has been paid to accuracy and precision in taking the census of your district, as many weighty inferences will be drawn from the relatively increased population which you will exhibit. I request you to furnish me a copy of the return as soon as you are in possession of it.

You have been made acquainted with Mr. and Mrs. Barings intention of making a voyage to Europe.

The frame of mind in which my recent domestic affliction has left me, and the continued renewal of my grief from all the scenes which surround me, have induced me, by the advice of my friends, to make an excursion, and I have at length determined to accompany my daughter and Mr. Baring, who will probably take their departure in the course of next month. Many of my affairs will be deranged by this temporary absence.

But there are few considerations that can be put into competition with tranquillity of mind. I am gratified in thinking that no serious detriment can be derived to the progress of our settlement, from my early departure. You will as usual communicate with me by letter, addressed to Sir Francis Baring and Company, London, and you will receive regular replies thereto. The only difference will be, that you will not be furnished with such prompt answers, but our affairs have been brought to that simple state, as not to require much interference on our part.

I shall again write to you on the subject of some other parts of your late communications which I am at present prevented from doing by this opportunity. I shall likewise write to Mr. Richards, to whom remember me affectionately.

With sincere regard I am

Dear General

Your obedient humble servant

WM. BINGHAM

General Cobb

*Bingham to Knox, Philadelphia, 20 July 1801 [KP]*⁶

Philadelphia July 20th 1801

My dear General:

I wrote you some time ago on the subject of a suit commenced against me by the Cabots and others, owners of the *Pilgrim* privateer, for the recovery of a vessel and cargo, carried into Martinico during the last war, and which were neutral property.

The United States are bound to indemnify me for any damages, which may be recovered in this suit. At the same time, I find the most vile misrepresentations have been made on the subject, and the greatest prejudices excited. At the trial in the Circuit Court, all the testimony which could explain the nature of the transaction and justify my conduct, was rejected by Judge Cushing,⁷ and in the recent trial in the Essex Court, Mr. Davis did not think it proper to appear, and judgment went by default.

I will not attempt to account for his motives. He had the direction of the suit committed to his care by the Secretary of State and was told that the United States were responsible for the result. Perhaps it was not advisable to commit to Mr. Ames and him the defense of a suit against persons, with whom they are connected by ties of intimacy and friendship. However, it could not have been otherwise with respect to Mr. Davis, as being Attorney of the District, he must have been officially employed by the United States. And as for Mr. Ames, I suggested his name to the Secretary of State, and urged him to employ additional council, for Mr. Davis had declined doing it, altho as early as 1797, he was enjoined by the Secretary to engage such council at the expence of the United States.

I am the more discontented with the conduct of these gentlemen, as in order to effect a compromise, which I cannot consistent with my duty agree to, they endeavor to excite in my mind, apprehensions with respect to my being reimbursed by the United States, altho I have informed them, that I have, independent of the engagements of the old Confederation, the most unequivocal assurances on that score, from the present Government. Mr. Ames has recently hinted that a judgment obtained in the Supreme Court of Massachusetts might be levied on my lands in Maine, but I can hardly suppose, that the Courts will refuse a removal of the suit into the courts of the United States, which would be contravening the express provisions of the Judiciary Act.⁸ But they alledge that this privilege is

⁶ KP, XLIV. 33.

⁷ William Cushing, one of the Justices of the Supreme Court, then on circuit duty.

⁸ Section 25 of the Judiciary Act set forth the conditions under which a suit might be removed from a state to a federal court. In general such a removal could be made

only granted to the defendant, and that by an appeal to the Supreme Court from the Court of Common Pleas in Essex, I have become *plaintiff*. Mr. Davis's non appearance placed me in this predicament.

I have been informed by very respectable authority that "the clamor made by my adversaries has long been loud, and must have stamped stubborn prejudices on most of the Essex juror's minds" so that there is no prospect of an impartial trial in that quarter. Whereas, if the truth was known, my conduct would be deemed irreproachable in every point of view which regards this business. To repel such illiberal representations as may have been made, it becomes necessary that I should exhibit a fair and candid statement of this transaction, which I have prepared and now enclose you a copy of the same.

I have had it printed, as it was too voluminous to admit of taking, without great trouble, a number of manuscript copies, which I might have occasion for. I shall be obliged to you, if you will give it an attentive perusal, by which you will be acquainted with all the merits of the case.

You will then form an opinion of the effect which a verdict and judgment for nearly \$40,000, in favor of these Essex gentlemen, will have on the United States, considering all circumstances.

This statement is sent to you in confidence, as I do not wish it to circulate extensively as it may be injurious to a certain person, whose character is implicated therein, but he does not merit such delicacy on my part, as he has been very little attentive to my feelings in the progress of this business.

I want you to write to me frequently and give me any information relative to the progress of population and settlement in the District, especially what may concern the lands on the Kennebec.

You will address your letters to the care of Sir Francis Baring Baronet and Company, London.

With my best wishes I am with sincere regard

Dear General

Your obedient humble servant

WM. BINGHAM

General Knox
St. Georges
District of Maine

Bingham to Cobb, Philadelphia, 26 July 1801 [CP]

Dear General:

Philadelphia July 26th 1801

I wrote to you under date of the 8th instant and directed my letter to when the suit involved the authority of the federal government and the decision in the state court went against that authority.

you, at Boston or at Gouldsbrough. I expected you would have given orders at the post office to retain all letters to your address which might arrive at Boston. If I do not hear from you in two or three days, I shall be apprehensive of the letter having been forwarded to Gouldsbrough.

You have heard of the suit brought against me in Massachusetts by the Cabots and others, owners of the *Pilgrim* privateer. This cause has had various decisions against them, but they still persevere, under an expectation of succeeding in their claim, by recovery of an immense sum of money, to which it amounts.

From suppressing all the testimony which can throw light upon this affair, at the time of the former trials, the truth could not appear, and great prejudices were excited, insomuch that I am informed from very respectable authority, that there is little chance of a fair trial in Essex.

In order to place this matter in its true point of view, I have made a statement of all the essential proceedings relative thereto, founded on the documents, which belong to the subject. Wishing to have a number of copies, I thought it most advisable to have it printed, as it was too voluminous for manuscripts.

I enclose you a copy, which I request you would give an attentive perusal. I do not give much credit to Mr. Davis or Mr. Ames for their conduct in this suit, as without being very lukewarm on the subject, it must necessarily have been long since finally terminated. The conduct of the former, by not appearing at the Court of Common Pleas at Essex, has been the cause of the suit being now placed in its present situation, altho he had been instructed by the Secretary to defend it, and told that the United States were responsible for the result, and altho he knew that no other council was at that time employed by the Government. Perhaps it is imposing too great a task on human nature to solicit the aid of professional men to defend a suit against those with whom they are in the habits of extreme intimacy and friendship. I mention these circumstances [in] confidence, as I would not wish to wound the feelings of these gentlemen, but I dread the clamor that will be made when provision for the payment of this money is to be made by Congress, after a verdict and judgment shall have been obtained.⁹ Mr. Ames in a late letter, mentions that after judgment, they may levy on my lands in Maine, and as his object was to create apprehensions, he immediately after proposes a compromise to me which it is impossible I can agree to, as without the consent of Congress, I cannot surrender the trust committed to my

⁹ Bingham, as a prominent Federalist, was afraid the Republican majority in Congress might refuse to honor his claim.

charge, however harrassed and persecuted I may be on the subject. Besides I am convinced that they can exhibit no proof of the property being British, and liable to condemnation.¹

To remove any unfavorable impression which might arise from my being in possession of this money, I solicited the Treasury to receive it, but a difficulty was started by the Comptroller whether the Treasury could receive any but public monies.

By being acquainted with the leading points of this business, you will be able to correct the infamous misrepresentations which may have been made concerning it, and for which I will thank you, when an opportunity offers.

I wish to hear from you with respect to the power necessary to be given in order to convey to the settlers on the Kennebec tract, their respective lots of land.

I shall take my departure in about eight or ten days, after which you will please to write me, to the care of Sir Francis Baring Baronet and Company, London.

I shall be happy to receive from you such communications as may place the Kennebec lands in their true point of view. The rapid population of this neighbourhood, which shows the preference given to these lands, is a very prominent proof of their advantages, both in respect to soil and situation, but documents to exhibit this, and other important facts, are wanting, and which I shall be very happy to obtain.

I am with sincerity and esteem

Dear General

Your obedient humble servant

WM. BINGHAM

General Cobb
Gouldsborough
District of Maine

*Proceedings Relative to the Danish Brig Hope and Cargo*² [BP]

The Danish Brig *Hope*, commanded by Capt. Ole Heilm, loaded with 983 barrels of flour, on a voyage from Cork to Lisbon, was captured by

¹ Bingham later learned that he was wrong in this. See below, p. 1152.

² This account of the Cabot Suit is taken from the first part of a pamphlet which Bingham had printed sometime during the spring of 1801 to support his claims, and which he speaks of to both Knox and Cobb (see above, pp. 1126 and 1127). The second part of the pamphlet consists of a series of documents which are included to prove the assertions he makes in this account. Since Bingham footnoted his own account very thoroughly, I have simply followed his lead, substituting numbered footnotes

the privateer *Pilgrim*, Capt. Hill, and sent to Martinico.³ . . . From investigating the papers it appeared that both vessel and cargo were neutral property.⁴ The Captain, therefore, demanded permission from the government to take his departure as soon as he could procure the necessary repairs to his vessel.

But as the cargo consisted of a perishable commodity, and was much wanted for the use of the Colony, the General ordered it to be disposed of, and the proceeds lodged in my hands, after paying freight and disbursements of the vessel, until Congress should determine to whom the property belonged.⁵

I immediately wrote to Congress and transmitted copies of the papers found on board.⁶

The account sales and account current were regularly forwarded to Congress, and the nett proceeds carried to their credit⁷ (under date of the 7th July 1779) on a presumption, as expressed in my letter, "that it would remain a long time without being reimbursed, and not until the claim of the real owners in Europe was made clear and manifest, and that they would, on application of the parties, determine in whom the right of property was vested, and appropriate it accordingly,"⁸ which

for the marginal asterisks and page references of the original. The use of the series of periods is taken from the original and does not indicate ellipsis. The documents printed at the end of this pamphlet will be hereafter cited as *Pamphlet Documents*.

There is a vast amount of material on this case in BP, including all the originals of the documents which are printed in this pamphlet. I have made no attempt to go behind the pamphlet itself, since Bingham's account is sufficiently detailed to provide a background for the effect of this suit on the Maine Lands.

There is an excellent account of the Cabot Suit in M. L. Brown, "William Bingham, Agent of the Continental Congress in Martinique," and "William Bingham, Eighteenth Century Magnate," *Pa. Mag. of Hist. and Biog.*, LXI. 30-34 and 431-432, where numerous additional references are cited.

³ See the bills of lading in *Pamphlet Documents*, 1. These seem to indicate that there were 1,000 barrels of flour. The cargo was shipped by Denroches and Thompson of Cork to Joao Pedro de Lisboa of Lisbon.

⁴ See Heilm's statement sworn before Bingham at Martinique, 17 January 1779, in *Pamphlet Documents*, 1. Heilm swears that the *Hope* is a Danish vessel but says nothing about the character of the cargo.

⁵ The certificate of the Marquis de Bouillé, acknowledging that he ordered the sale of the cargo, is in *Pamphlet Documents*, 4. It is dated Martinique, 2 October 1779.

⁶ See Bingham to Secret Committee of Congress, St. Pierres, Martinique, 2 February 1779, *Pamphlet Documents*, 5.

⁷ Bingham's accounts, dated St. Pierre, Martinique, 7 July 1779, are in *Pamphlet Documents*, 2-3.

⁸ See Bingham to Secret Committee of Congress, St. Pierres, 2 February 1779, *Pamphlet Documents*, 5. This letter contains the sense of the quoted statement, but the wording is different.

evinced no disposition on my part to retain these funds and benefit by the use of them. . . . The affair being thus situated, I received a letter from Wm. Tudor, Esq., of Boston, dated August 22d, 1779, informing me of the owners of the *Pilgrim* privateer having attached my property to a considerable amount, on a pretended plea of my being indebted to them for the proceeds of this cargo, and the value of this Danish vessel.⁹ I immediately addressed a letter to the Secret Committee of Congress on the subject,¹ dated October 6th, 1779, which, with the papers inclosed, were referred to a committee, who made a report on the 29th November, 1779, which was immediately adopted by Congress.²

In consequence of which, a letter was addressed to the legislature of Massachusetts, requesting them to interfere in removing "the attachments, *until judgment could be obtained upon the principal question* (prize or no prize) *by an appeal to the Admiralty courts of Martinique* (which at this period had power to take cognizance of captures made by American armed vessels), *after which it would be in my power to discharge myself* (of my trusteeship) *by delivering to the true owners, the property placed in my hands for their use.*"³

Hence the committee of Congress, who were appointed to liquidate my accounts, directed, in conformity with this arrangement, the credit for the proceeds of this cargo to be withdrawn and that I should retain the proceeds in my hands; as will appear by a reference to my accounts, and to the certificate of the Auditor of the Treasury.⁴

They were prompted to replace this business on the original footing of personal responsibility, under the trust, as ordered by the Marquis de Bouille, as instead of undertaking the decision themselves, they referred the parties to the courts of Martinique, where I was to be accountable for the proceeds . . . and this arrangement likewise exempted them from the immediate payment of a claim for damages I sustained, by the attachment of my property at Boston, not only for its specific amount, but

⁹ See William Tudor to Bingham, Boston, 22 August 1779, *Pamphlet Documents*, 7. Tudor was counsel for Thomas Russell, Bingham's agent in Boston.

¹ See Bingham to Secret Committee of Congress, St. Pierres, 6 October 1779, *Pamphlet Documents*, 5-7, in which he reviews his conduct in the case and asks for help.

² This resolution directed the Massachusetts legislature to call off the suit until the ownership of the cargo could be determined. See *Pamphlet Documents*, 8.

³ This letter was part of the resolution cited above. Again the wording of the text is different from that of the document.

⁴ For this certificate, dated Auditor's Office, 30 April 1800, and signed by R. Harrison, see *Pamphlet Documents*, 3.

for the injury derived from its being diverted from the purposes to which I had destined it.

The nett proceeds of this captured property were thus replaced in my hands, to be applied as might be determined by an Admiralty jurisdiction, as alone in the opinion of Congress competent to the decision.

But the plaintiffs refusing to appeal to the Admiralty Courts at Martini-co, continued their two suits at common law in Massachusetts . . . , not confining their claims to the funds in my hands, being the nett proceeds of the cargo . . . , but laying their damages in one suit, for the value of the flour at a very advanced price, without any deduction for freight, disbursements or charges,⁵ and in the other suit, for the estimated value of the vessel.⁶

These actions were grounded on a plea, which rendered them totally distinct from any connection with the funds placed by Congress in my hands, to await the issue of an Admiralty trial. . . . Besides, they embraced far more extensive demands than could be satisfied by the amount of the deposited monies.

Hence on a representation to Congress⁷ exhibiting the hardship of my case, as well from being made personally responsible for the result of a business over which I had no controul, as from the injury I sustained by the depreciation of the funds attached in the hands of my correspondents, they entered into various resolutions in June 1780⁸ . . . , which was seven months after they had replaced the proceeds of the cargo in my hands.

They therein not only justified and approved my conduct, but engaged a full reimbursement of my expenses and damages. They moreover exonerated me from the trouble of the suit, took the management thereof into their own hands, and employed the Navy Board at Boston to "direct the Council in its defence, and to give such security in the name of the United States, as the Court might require."⁹ I was of course discharged from any attention to the object. The money advanced to council for

⁵ The attachment order, issued by John Jay and dated Boston, 22 January 1793, commanded the Marshal to seize Bingham's goods up to the value of \$20,000. See *Pamphlet Documents*, 17-18. The date of this order is significant. At this time Bingham was in the midst of his negotiations with the Massachusetts Land Committee and less than a week later was to come to the final agreement. He would then have property in Massachusetts which could be attached.

⁶ A similar order of same date and issue for the seizure of goods up to \$10,000. See *Pamphlet Documents*, 19-20.

⁷ This was Bingham's Memorial to Congress, dated Philadelphia, 6 June 1780, in which he asks Congress to investigate and take action in the matter. See *Pamphlet Documents*, 8-9.

⁸ These resolutions are dated 20 June 1780. See *Pamphlet Documents*, 9-10.

⁹ This is a slightly altered version of the fourth of the resolutions cited above.

their fees etc. by my correspondent, was reimbursed, and I ceased to have any connection with the business, except that of having my name introduced into it.

It was well known to Congress that when I accepted the appointment of political agent throughout the French West Indies, it became an essential part of my duty, in compliance with my instructions, to promote such acts, and induce such proceedings, as would bring the two powers (England and France) into frequent collision, and eventually involve them in war. . . . My successful exertions to produce this effect was a prominent complaint exhibited in the Justificative Memorial of Great Britain, and had previously been the cause of repeated diplomatic representations to the Court of Versailles on the part of the British minister. . . . Next in consequence to fitting our armed vessels, and manning them with Frenchmen, was the permission to sell our prizes in their ports. . . . But although this latter indulgence was granted long before a war existed betwixt the two countries, yet it was always under the restriction of previous proof being produced of enemy's property . . . , for which purpose, the ship's papers found on board were exhibited to an officer of the Government. . . . This practice continued after the declaration of war against Great Britain and until the courts of Martinico were authorized to take cognizance of American captures . . . , which happened in the summer of 1779, and to which tribunal, Congress then requested the parties to apply, in order to determine the legality of their capture, but which they declined.

The suit was tried in the inferior Court of Massachusetts in the year 1781, and a verdict obtained in favor of the defendant.

An appeal was made to the Supreme Judicial Court of the said State, and a verdict of the same nature in the year 1784 was the result.¹

But had the plaintiffs on the contrary been successful, and recovered in these two suits, instituted in Massachusetts, the principal question (prize or no prize) to which Congress alluded in their proceedings of November, 1779, would have been still undetermined . . . , and until this question is settled, it is obvious from the conditions of the trust, that the neutral owners, or their representatives cannot be divested of their right to the proceeds of this cargo, but may claim it "*as property placed in my hands for their use,*" which is confirmed by the opinion of the Supreme Court of the United States. . . . See Dallas's Reports.²

¹ The document cited simply states that Bingham is not guilty in the suit of William Carlton *vs.* Thomas Russell, Trustee of William Bingham. It is undated. See *Pamphlet Documents*, 21.

² The decision is in *Dallas Reports*, III. 19-42.

The long period of time which has elapsed, without a claim being made on the part of the neutrals, appears to favor the pretensions of the captors. . . . It is presumable, however, that the owners have been reimbursed by the underwriters, and that the latter are ignorant of the original destination, and actual situation of these funds. . . . An abandonment of captured property on the part of the underwriters, in cases much less equivocal and desperate than this must have appeared to be, is daily witnessed by our own observations. . . . Indeed, in cases where so many persons are individually and separately concerned, it is difficult to combine them together, in order to produce a joint effort.

I was ignorant of the favorable termination of these suits, until after a new demand was made upon me by the owners of this privateer (whilst in Boston in January 1793), which induced me to make some enquiry on the subject.

In an interview with Mr. Lowell, council for the owners, I urged him to recommend to his clients an application on their part to Congress for the balance which remained in my hands, having been received on trust, sanctioned by the approbation of that body, and whilst acting in a public character, it became a deposit which I could not surrender, without the intervention of the authority of the United States . . . , that Congress might be favourably inclined to their claim, although it was probable in this case, that they would exact a security, to indemnify the United States against the foreign owners, in case they should hereafter appear; and that the loss, incurred by their attachment of my property in the hands of my correspondents, where it had ever since remained, would of course, constitute a set off against the nett proceeds of the cargo, whenever a liquidation of the account took place.

They were so dissatisfied with this language, and with my refusal to accommodate the business, without the consent of Congress previously obtained, that they immediately, at the instance of Mr. Thorndike (one of the owners) commenced a suit against me, for the proceeds of the flour, estimating it at livres 140,000,³ as well as for the value of the vessel;⁴ and I was under the necessity of giving security to the extent of 30,000 dollars, to abide the issue of this trial . . . whereas the balance of the mon-

³ The owners' bill to Bingham, dated 8 May 1779, comes to \$30,885.53. See *Pamphlet Documents*, 20. In the court order mentioned above, the owners are given as John Cabot, George Cabot, Joseph Lee, Moses Brown, and Israel Thorndike of Beverly, Joshua Ward and Stephen Cleveland of Salem, Jonathan Jackson of Newburyport, Francis Cabot of George Town, Maryland, and Samuel Cabot of Boston.

⁴ The vessel was valued by the captors at \$4,000. See court order cited above, *Pamphlet Documents*, 19.

ey deposited in my hands does not amount to but dollars 4,734, as is evident from the following statement.

		<i>Livres</i>	<i>Dollars</i>
Nett proceeds of Flour		107,621 14 6	
<i>Deduct</i>			
Vessel's freight	6,441 9 9		
Disbursements	<u>17,211 8 3</u>	23,652 18 0	
		83,968 14 6	10,178.38
		<i>Boston Currency</i>	
Attached and still laying in the hands of Mr. Thomas Russell		£13,780 17 3 ⁵	
Attached and still laying in the hands of Mr. Erskine		<u>13,673 5 6⁶</u>	
		£27,454 2 9	
(which is dollars)		91,513.80	
According to the scale of depreciation at that period makes			<u>5,444.78</u>
		Balance, dollars	4,734.

Which balance I offered to pay into the Treasury of the United States, but there were several difficulties suggested by the Comptroller, amongst others, "whether any but public money could be received into the Treasury."

On my arrival in Philadelphia, I applied to the Government to fulfil the engagements of Congress, and defend this suit, instituted against me . . . , in consequence of which application, the Attorney General, Mr. Randolph, addressed a letter to Mr. Gore, District Attorney of Massachusetts, requiring him, by direction of the President, to defend this suit, and to report to the President the result thereof.

At the same time, I wrote a letter to Mr. Gore, and inclosed him at the Attorney General's request, the various documents, drawn from the files of the public offices,⁷ which were necessary for the defence of the suit as the papers transmitted by Congress to the legislature of Massachusetts,

⁵ This document displays Thomas Russell's accounting to Bingham for the sale of thirty barrels of West India rum, sold by Russell for Bingham. The account is dated Boston, 26 October 1779. See *Pamphlet Documents*, 10-11.

⁶ This document is a similar accounting by William Erskine dated Boston, 8 September 1779. This cargo was made up of sugar and rum. See *Pamphlet Documents*, 12.

⁷ This letter, dated Philadelphia, 19 April 1793, is a very full review of the whole case with comments on the pertinent documents. See *Pamphlet Documents*, 28-31.

and which passed into the hands of the Navy Board at Boston, when Congress ordered them to defend the suit, were not to be found.

The cause was tried at a Circuit Court of the United States, and a verdict obtained for the plaintiffs.⁸ . . . Two other suits, one for the same flour, and the other trover for the vessel, were continued, to wait the event of an appeal to the Supreme Court of the United States, after a Bill of Exceptions had been filed.⁹ . . . The most extravagant damages had been awarded on the deposition of Mr. Lowell, who withheld from the Court and Jury the accounts, copies of which he had exhibited to me, and deposed that I had informed him that the flour sold for 140 livres the barrel.¹ . . . The impossibility of such a declaration having been made on my part, will appear by a reference to his letter² (at the time he made the overture in behalf of the plaintiffs) which inclosed me exact copies of my account current and account sales, as transmitted to Congress.³ Nothing but insanity could therefore have induced me to assert *to Mr. Lowell*, what was contradicted on the face of my accounts, presented to me *by Mr. Lowell*.

The resolution of Congress, the certificate of the Marquis de Bouille, and all other proofs and papers offered as testimony on the part of the United States, were refused by the court,⁴ from which circumstance, the real merits of the case were not investigated.

A bill of exceptions was filed, by the Council employed by the United States, and an appeal made to the Supreme Court of the United States. . . . I applied to the Secretary of State to fulfil the engagements of the Government and give the security that might be required on taking out a writ.⁵ . . . On the report of the Attorney General, I was requested to cause the necessary bail to be given, under an assurance, that the United States would indemnify me.⁶ On a hearing before the Supreme Court which was conducted by the Attorney General of the United States, when

⁸ See James Sullivan and Christopher Gore to Bingham, Boston, 14 June 1794, *Pamphlet Documents*, 13-14, which reports on this trial.

⁹ This statement is in the letter cited in footnote 8 above.

¹ This statement is in the letter cited in footnote 8 above.

² See John Lowell, Jr., to Bingham, Boston, [?] January 1793, *Pamphlet Documents*, 23-24.

³ These accounts, dated 8 November 1779, are in *Pamphlet Documents*, 25-26.

⁴ This statement is in the letter cited in footnote 8 above.

⁵ See Bingham to the Secretary of State, Philadelphia, 31 July 1794, *Pamphlet Documents*, 16.

⁶ See William Bradford to Bingham, Philadelphia [?], 7 August 1794, *Pamphlet Documents*, 16-17.

the merits were fully discussed, the judgment of the Circuit Court was reversed, and the cause determined to be of Admiralty jurisdiction.⁷ . . . See Dallas's Reports, vol. 3, page 19, etc.

A new suit was instituted in Massachusetts, and a verdict obtained for the plaintiffs, which (for informality) was set aside by an appeal to the Supreme Court.

After which, the parties commenced a suit in the Court of Common Pleas in the county of Essex, where the District Attorney, employed by the United States, not appearing thereto, judgment went by default. . . . The damages were now swelled to a still larger amount (dollars 37,490 and 74 cents) in consequence of the testimony of Mr. Lowell, council for the plaintiffs, who *now*, in contradiction to his former oath, deposed, that I had informed him, that the flour sold for 144 livres, per barrel.⁸ . . . His former deposition confined it to 140 livres.⁹

Both the Secretary and myself were ignorant of the time when this trial would take place. It was only known, through the medium of some friends in Massachusetts, that such a suit had been instituted; but it was supposed that the judgment of the Supreme Court of the United States, and the verdict and judgment formerly obtained in the state of Massachusetts, would be pleaded by Mr. Davis, and operate as a bar against the Court holding jurisdiction over it. . . . But he unfortunately declined making any appearance at this court. He might then have removed the suit into the Circuit Court of the United States, in virtue of the provisions of the Judiciary Act of Congress. But by suffering judgment to go by default, it became necessary, by a Writ of Review, to bring the matter before the Supreme Court of the State, where I of course was made plaintiff . . . , and as the right of removal of a suit is by the Judiciary Act confined to the defendant, the Court resisted the application of the Council, and assumed exclusive jurisdiction over the same. . . . It is scarcely credible that by such a manoeuvre, the Act of Congress can be altogether evaded, and the United States be deprived of their right of having this cause tried in their own courts.

The District Attorney's motives are unaccountable. . . . He had received from the Secretary of State instructions to appear in this suit, on behalf of the United States, and was informed that the obligation of the

⁷ The decision of the Supreme Court, given 2 March 1795, is in *Pamphlet Documents*, 21-22.

⁸ See extract from the deposition of John Lowell, Jr., dated Boston, 1 October 1798, *Pamphlet Documents*, 28.

⁹ See footnote 8, page 1135.

United States to defend it, was unquestionable.¹ . . . He was further told that the United States were responsible for the damages which might be recovered,² and he was enjoined by the Secretary to engage counsel, at their expense to assist him, and which the importance of the case would warrant.³

He was referred to the resolution of Congress of June, 1780, by which Congress became accountable for the amount of "what might be recovered against me, by reason of any suits which were then, or might thereafter be brought against me, in the state of Massachusetts." He must have known that the operation of his instructions to defend this suit, was of course co-extensive with the obligation of the United States; and in the language of the resolution of Congress, embraced all suits, "that were then or might thereafter, be brought against me." . . . He was referred to Dallas's Reports, which showed the propriety of having recourse to the cognizance of the Courts of the United States, which had already determined this cause to be of Admiralty jurisdiction.

As a justification of his conduct, he afterwards alledges that he wanted some authority from me, or directions from the Secretary of State.⁴ . . . As for myself, he knew I never had any further agency in the business, than under the controul of the Secretary to impart such information to the Council, as might essentially benefit the cause, and to which I was more particularly induced, from having my conduct illiberally censured in the course of one of the trials, when no testimony on my part was permitted to be adduced. . . . As for the directions of the Secretary, they had been given in the most explicit manner, and related to all periods and all courts, in which this suit might appear. . . . The Attorney might at least (as during the progress of this suit, he had done, in a case of less importance), have suggested doubts, and solicited instructions⁵ . . . , as he was aware that he was the only person employed by the Government to pay attention to it. . . . But the first communication from him was in reply to a letter of the Secretary, who urged a removal of the suit into the Federal Courts,

¹ See extract from the letter of Timothy Pickering to John Davis, Philadelphia [?], 1 October 1796, *Pamphlet Documents*, 31-32.

² See extract from the letter of Pickering to Davis, Philadelphia [?], 12 September 1797, *Pamphlet Documents*, 32.

³ See extract from the letter of Pickering to Davis, Philadelphia [?], 12 September 1797, *Pamphlet Documents*, 32.

⁴ See extract from the letter of Davis to Pickering, Boston, 2 April 1799, *Pamphlet Documents*, 32.

⁵ See Davis to Pickering, Boston, 1 November 1796, *Pamphlet Documents*, 22, in which Davis asks for instructions on how to proceed with the Bingham case.

after he had received a copy of the verdict and judgment of the Essex Court, transmitted by the adverse Council.

W. B.

Ross to Cobb, Union River, 12 August 1801 [CP]

Dear Sir:

Union River 12th August 1801

Permit me most cordially to congratulate you on your safe return to your good family at Goldsborough, whom I hope you have found all well. If your own health is as good as it apparently was when I had the pleasure of seeing you at Boston and continues so, you must enjoy certainly a happiness that, was I an Indian nabob I would give many sacks to possess. But we ought and if not we must remain satisfied with the portion respectively allotted us. We may grumble 'tis true, but grumbling avails little, nay nothing. My excursion I believe has been of service to me. My health is much better since my return than it has been for several years past.

Could we have the honor of seeing you now at Union River you would probably be better pleased than on any of your former jaunts. Tho' we have no bridge, yet we have several fine pieces of wheat, rye, barley, and oats that look very promising and doubtless will be abundantly productive. And tho' it is still on a small scale, yet the stimulus that even the prospect has already given, will am pretty confident be the means of a much greater exertion another year. Our crops of English Grass have fallen short. Gardens are nothing. The meadows are pretty well [torn] are now mowing them and almost at loggerheads who shall have the most. I told Mr. Jones⁶ on applying to me that I was restricted from giving him any permission, and that I had sent people to cut (where he wanted to) on my own account. On his threatening to go *vis et armis*, being then doing business for Collector Jordan⁷ at his house, I warned him from trespassing at the peril of a prosecution, which he said he would risque. Rather than proceed to extremities I agreed to cut only half the meadow in dispute, he to risque your and Mr. Richards displeasure, as I would not give him any permission to cut the other. As you told me to have no further regard to Sawyer's⁸ claim than to reserve enough for his own accomodation, I have accordingly granted permits to cut on parts where he claims. Should he

⁶ This was the same Jones who had been in trouble before. See above, p. 959, note 3.

⁷ Meletiah Jordan, one of the first settlers in what is now Ellsworth.

⁸ Possibly Jacob Sawyer, a signer of an Ellsworth petition to the General Court in 1808. See A. H. Davis, *History of Ellsworth*, 70.

come to you on the subject, you will observe that the land has never been run out to him neither does his northern line commence within $\frac{1}{4}$ of a mile where your agreement with him states it should, so am informed.

When I have the pleasure of seeing you, I will be ready to acknowledge your goodness to me at Boston. Permit me to offer my best respects to Mrs. Cobb and all the family and believe me to be with the greatest respect and esteem, dear sir

Your most obedient and obliged servant

DONALD ROSS

Honorable David Cobb, Esquire

Bingham to Cobb, Bath, England, 1 January 1802 [CP]

Bath January 1 1802

Dear General:

I had the pleasure of writing to you a short time after my arrival, since which I have not been favored with any of your letters. Previous to my departure I requested you would give me information with respect to a variety of matters, but particularly that you would impart to me every thing relative to the Kennebec tract, in the form of documents substantiating the value of these lands, as relative to soil, situation, surrounding population, and susceptibility of settlement. I wished to avail myself of this species of information, in order to turn this property to some account, which should not be neglected, as it has already suffered from want of this necessary attention.

And to undertake the business solely and without support is a work too weighty and extensive for my faculties and resources. I hope soon to receive from you every thing on the score of information, as relative to this subject which I have requested from you, as well as a detailed account of your proceedings for some time past, which I shall wish to communicate to the gentlemen who are interested in the concern.

The return of peace must operate very powerfully on the interests of our Maine property. It must tend essentially to raise the value of the exports from that country, which must of course increase the active capital of the District and thereby augment the price of lands.

Lumber of all kinds has immensely risen in Europe from the devastation which is common during war and the consequent scarcity. This country will of course offer an excellent market, but it will be necessary to accommodate the various species of lumber to the taste and fashion of the country, by preparing it at the mills according to patterns, which may be sent for the purpose.

Freight will be greatly reduced, as I know no mode of employing your large vessels but in the transportation of such bulky articles, but it is not only wood of all kinds, but every species of provisions has risen, and they are likely to sustain high prices in this country which must undoubtedly have a corresponding effect in America.

The reinstatement of St. Domingo, which is a favorite object with the French, and the establishment of Trinidad by the British will furnish very abundant markets for the exports of Maine, and will afford great encouragement for extensive cultivation.

This is the period to which I always looked forward, as opening the brightest prospects for Maine, and affording the greatest advantages of which the country is susceptible in its present uncultivated state.

Great activity and exertion are necessary, but they will not be wanting, as the inhabitants appear to be intelligent and industrious. I am inclined to think that the English West India Islands as well as the Dutch will be compelled to open an intercourse with the New England States, as they cannot be supplied from any other source with a variety of articles which they stand essentially in need of.

As the trade of the large capital cities in America will be very much diminished from the peace (as a great portion of it arose from the circumstances of the carrying trade of the belligerent powers during the war), I flatter myself that many of the smaller traders in Boston and other parts of Massachusetts, who will be considerably thrown out of employment, may be induced to remove to Maine, and by increasing the wealth and carrying on the commerce of the District, thereby stimulate the industry of the country, which will be always greatly promoted by offering a ready market for the produce of the inhabitants.

Altho it is probable that our commercial people, in the first moments of stagnation of business, which the news of peace will of course produce, will feel the pressure of difficulties and distress, yet, when this period is passed over and they have collected their funds from all quarters, they will certainly amount to a sum far beyond what their trade, under the restrictions it will be exposed to, can possibly require. I know of no mode of employing this surplus wealth but by purchases of real estate, as the country is too thinly peopled to admit of a successful attention to manufactures.

The public funds may be an object to a certain extent, but they never can absorb but a small portion of this superabundant capital. I therefore view the rise of lands as a necessary consequence of a peace.

But it is not only with respect to capital that there will be a redun-

dancy. It will likewise take place in regard to a great portion of that industry which has hitherto been confined to commerce, which by being essentially curtailed, will remove great numbers from their usual occupation and employment. Such persons cannot turn then to objects of greater importance in a moneymaking point of view, than superintending the settlement and improvement of lands, for which their mercantile pursuits and habits, requiring regularity, industry, and a knowledge of the world, peculiarly fit them. I expect therefore that there will be many young men (who will necessarily be detached from trade) who will devote themselves to these objects, as offering a fairer field for independency of situation and accumulation of property than any other. We have more instances of successful exertions of this nature in the middle states, to operate as an incentive, than you have to the eastward.

I therefore think that you will be more dilatory in generally adopting this species of resource.

I have none of the papers relative to the concern in Maine, that I can turn to at present, having left them in London, where I shall return in about ten days. I will then give instructions to my agent in Philadelphia relative to several points, some of which are more immediately interesting to yourself, which during my agitation of spirits and hurry previous to my departure, I omitted.

I wish you to inform me very particularly of the changes that will, according to your apprehensions take place in the District, from the event of peace.

I desire you to remember me affectionately to all your family. Tell Mr. Richards that on my return to London I am to have the pleasure of meeting his father at Stratton, an estate of Sir Francis Barings. I hope his family are well.

With sincere regard, I am,

Dear General

Yours, etc.

WM. BINGHAM

General Cobb
Gouldsborough

Wilde to Cobb, Hallowell, 2 January 1802 [CP]

Hallowell January 2d. 1802

Dear General:

Tho' I have heard nothing of your motions from Gouldsboro' westward yet I presume that you have by this time taken possession of your

winter quarters, with your mind made up for the labours of the approaching session. As a beginning of difficulties, may I beg the favour of your attention to a few words on the subject of the proposition by our friends from Portland. I mean the proposal of a separation of Maine from Massachusetts. Tho' I do not know your feelings and sentiments upon this subject, yet I am somehow persuaded, that they accord with my own, which, the more I reflect on the subject, are the more confirmed, that the proposal is hostile to the peace and prosperity of Maine, and that it will probably give rise to more difficulties than our friends from Portland seem to imagine. The idea of giving strength to the Federal interest by the addition of two senators in Congress seems to me will hardly bear examination. Were Vermont and Rhode Island added to Massachusetts, New Hampshire or Connecticut, we should do much better. These little states are so easily operated upon by artful and ambitious demagogues, that we can make no dependance upon their stability or correctness. In Maine I fear we should not do much better. There is a spirit in the people of Maine hostile to all correct notions respecting title to lands. To flatter this spirit would be the business of unprincipled and ambitious men. No large proprietors would be safe either in their persons or property. Sentiments leading to this have been already avowed by persons from whom we should have expected better things. Upon the whole I am for myself convinced that the lapse of two or three years under a separate government, would place Henry Dearborn in the chair, give a new tone to our political sentiments, and make every honest man sick of his new State. And for what object are we to disturb the present tranquil state of our affairs? I confess I can see none, nor have I conversed with a man who can distinctly point out a reason for a change. The arguments made use of have been so vague and hypothetical, that they may be fully answered, I think, without the aid of any objections to ballance them. Indeed I was of opinion, when the subject was first mentioned, that it would subside without exciting much interest, but I find the business seems to assume a more formidable aspect, and tho' I think it will eventually fail, yet I fear it will go so far, as to create among us some unpleasant divisions. If the business should come before the legislature (and it undoubtedly will) I will thank you, if leisure will permit, to give me some information of its progress. If the legislature should be inclined to hearken to the petitions, I presume they will not order a convention until the sense of the inhabitants is first taken as to the propriety and utility of such a measure. I really hope however that the matter may subside in some way which will give us less trouble. I have one thing more to add which may be worthy of no-

tice. We hear from Ballstown, Litchfield, and the other disaffected places⁹ where the subject of land titles has given so much trouble that they have lately had meetings, have discussed the subject, and have agreed to sign the petition which has been circulated among them. This will serve in some measure to show us with what spirit the subject will be pursued by some of our citizens. But I am growing tedious I fear. I should not have said so much upon this subject, were I not persuaded that the measure proposed, is full of difficulties and inconveniences, that it is both unnecessary and mischievous. If this persuasion is not well founded, I should wish it might be removed; otherwise that it might become general. Mr. Dummer¹ will be on in the course of two or three weeks. He will be upon what I call the right side of the question. Indeed this is the general impression here with our best informed men. There is but one exception, in our worthy friend Doctor C.² who has had his eye upon the *Chair* these many years. If the present measures should fail, suppose you should furnish him with one of your eastern islands, on which he may play *the Governor* 'till he is satisfied?

You probably received before you left Gouldsboro' a letter I addressed to you soon after *George*³ arrived here, and upon that supposition I will now only say that he is well, attends to his studies at the Academy steadily, and in no respect gives us any trouble. His disposition is uncommonly good and amiable, he is a great favourite with the family, and appears to be perfectly contented and satisfied with his situation.

We have at length received the smooth and horrid message of the *Presidents*.⁴ There is something very mean, I think, in his attempt to take all the merit of a full treasury to himself. One is reminded of what Virgil writes when some of his first writings were assumed by another—*sic vos non vobis millificatis apes*,⁵ etc. But as every man of information must know that we are indebted to the late administration for the present flourishing condition of our finances, we may judge pretty certainly, I think, to whom he in fact addresses his smooth and flattering message—the huzzas of the multitude are of more importance to him than the ap-

⁹ Ballstown then included the present towns of Jefferson and Whitefield.

¹ Presumably Nathaniel Dummer of Hallowell. He had been a judge in the Court of Common Pleas since 1799. See E. H. Nason, *Old Hallowell on the Kennebec*, 107-110.

² Daniel Cony.

³ Cobb's son, George Washington Cobb.

⁴ Jefferson's message to Congress of the preceding December.

⁵ This line is from Donatus's *Life of Vergil*.

plause and esteem of the virtuous and intelligent few, who judge by actions and motives and not by professions.

Shall we see you on your return, or shall you take passage by water? Mrs. Wilde is better than usual and the children are as fat, ragged, and saucy as ever.

With great respect I remain very sincerely

Your friend and servant

SAM S. WILDE

Cobb to Bingham, Boston, 11 April 1802 [CP]

Boston April 11th. 1802

Mr. Bingham:

My last was of July 25th 1801, soon after which on my return to Gouldsboro' I was favor'd with your several letters of June 21st and 30th, July 8th and 20th, and of August 1st 1801.⁶ Most of these letters unfortunately passed by me when I was in Boston, occasioned by their being put up in the Gouldsboro' mail at Philadelphia. Had they been directed for me at Boston, instead of Boston or Gouldsboro', I should have receiv'd them, as I had directed the post master at Boston to retain my letters.

The inclosed accounts will afford you a view of our proceedings for the last year. Our objects have been chiefly confin'd to making improvements in nearly the center of the tract (as will naturally facilitate the future settlement of the country) and in making such communications to them as are required. A road for this purpose has been laid open from the Mariaville settlement on Union River in No. 20, Middle Division, westward to Penobscot River, this being the natural rout for the emigrants from the west to pass into the tract.⁷ Beddington is in No. 23, Middle Division, and 4 [?] miles distant from Annsburgh in No. 17.⁸ At this place, Beddington, we have two settlers, one of which we have largely assisted, and he has sixty acres of land cut down and almost clear'd, 22 of which are now in rye and grass seeds, from which he had corn the last year, and this year he will have 25 acres more in corn. This settlement is 17 miles east of Mariaville. Between these two settlements, a road will gradually be laid open that settlers may have the benefit of viewing the places they may wish to occupy and have a communica-

⁶ I believe the fourth letter mentioned should read "July 26th."

⁷ This road could not have followed a very logical route, for unlike Cobb's other roads, there is no modern one that follows the same course.

⁸ The present town of Deblois.

tion to their improvements. When we add [?] this road in the progress of settlement will probably be continued east across the Western and Eastern Branches of Machias River to the St. Croix, opposite St. Andrews, and have such establishments at those two rivers as will prevent, if possible, the loggers from plundering the country above. We have three settlers at Annsburgh who have got up their houses and are making some decent improvements, but our settlers in general are not the true Yankee agriculturists that bid defiance to all difficulties. These characters are not to be obtain'd, in any numbers, untill the lands on the west of the Penobscot River are so fill'd with inhabitants as to command generally six or eight dollars per acre, a period not far distant.

You will observe that Machias has no credit yet for timber rents. This business has been unfortunately arrang'd, but it is in train to be productive.

Last December, as I came from Gouldsboro' to this place, I call'd on Dr. Cony at Kennebeck. He thinks the southern side of your lands on that river including a range of 3 townships north would be in as rapid state of settlement as any lands in that country, if security could be given to the settlers of their lands. Applications to him have been numerous, and with some he had engaged to sell 1,000 acres, one half at a dollar and the other at 75 cents per acre, remote from any settlement, one third of the purchase to be paid in hand, the other two thirds in two annual payments with interest, and four settlers are to be placed on the land within two years. He is persuaded, from the applications that have been made to him, that he can place upon those lands from 50 to 100 settlers per year at 75 cents and at 1 dollar per acre for the first 10 families on a new township. He thinks that more townships should be survey'd as he has applications for lands where they will be run out, and he assures me that he is ready to undertake to superintend the survey's and settlement of the tract for a stipend of 500 dollars per annum and to pay this or any other expence that may be tho't necessary, out of the lands, so as not to call upon you for a dollar; and he has not a doubt, over and above the obligations he may receive that he shall have an annual surplus in money for your use. All differences with the settlers on these lands are adjusted. Those few, whom you may remember had 200 acres of land assigned them by the Plymouth Company and which they intend'd to hold under that proprietor, have agreed to pay 25 dollars for the additional hundred acres to that that the State allow'd them, and most if not all the settlers are now ready to pay whenever they can receive their deeds. I really think it very injurious to your interest in these lands that a power for the sale of them was omitted being sent the last year. This power may be given to me and

Mr. Richards, who is willing to undertake this business for you, or to any others you may choose and I hope you will not omit doing it on the receipt of this.

Inclosed is a copy of the Doctors letters to me the last fall.⁹ On the subject of the last clause of it, I gave him directions to proceed with those plunderers as we had done with such fellows on the other tract, and on their refusing to comply, to prosecute them as trespassers.

As you had pointed out no mode, before your departure from this country, by which I could receive my annual stipend, I have taken the freedom thro' Mr. Codman to receive a part of it for the last year. One thousand dollars of the bill he drew upon you for in February last was on my account, the remainder was a small ballance due to him on the close of our accounts in 1800 and which he had omitted to draw for. If it would not be too inconvenient, I could wish your permission to receive thro' Mr. Codman one thousand dollars sometime in June next as in part of my stipend for 1803.

General Jackson is prosecuted by the State for the bond that was given on the contract for the back tract. The Resolve of the legislature on this subject I mentioned in my letter of June last. Your letter to me in answer, does not afford him the satisfaction he wants. As he is the only person that can relinquish this contract to the State, and as you have a just claim to it, if he undertakes to relinquish without your direction, he subjects himself to an Action of Damages, which you may bring against him, for doing it. He wishes a letter from you directing him to make the relinquishment, and which he is anxious to receive before the month of August next.

In the course of the late session of the legislature I presented a Memorial, as your agent, a copy of which is inclos'd, on the subject of township No. 23, East Division,¹ which altho' a Lottery Township was not deeded to you with the rest of the like townships in your purchase of the lower Million. As no sufficient reason could be assigned why it was not deeded I presumed the omission was an error. The committee who had this subject have reported a state of facts: that a contract was made for a million of acres to include the Lottery Townships; as these townships were not sufficient, a quantity of land was added at the head of the tract to make up the deficiency; and that you had the whole quantity deeded

⁹ This was presumably Cony to Cobb, Augusta, 1 December 1801, in CP. In this letter Cony makes a strong plea for devising some means of giving the settlers their deeds.

¹ There is an undated copy of this Memorial in CP. No. 23 is the present Centerville.

that was contracted for, without No. 23, East Division, but why this township was not then deeded, as it appears to have been contracted for, can not at present be ascertained. On this report, I observed that the gentlemen who were owners of that country did not wish an acre more than what had been contracted for, and altho' it appears that the whole quantity thus contracted for had been deeded which I was pleas'd to find, yet as it likewise appears that No. 23 was evidently included in the original contract and no sufficient reason can be assigned why it was not deeded, it would seem to afford some claim of p[r]eference or right of choice to the purchasers between this township and the northern head of the tract, and which we should wish to be indulged with in making this exchange if upon further investigation no further evidence should appear. Not that this township is better situated for settlement or that the soil is better than on the northern line, but solely for the purpose of occupying a mill seat on the Western Branch of Machias River that lays within this township, that the plunderers of the forests may be prevented from robbing the country that borders on the river of its timber and which the laws of the country are incable [*sic*] of restraining. The subject was referr'd to the next session for further information. If this exchange can be made it would be usefull and I think it can be effected. I have not heard a word on the subject of your settling duty, during the sessions.²

I hope not to omit giving you letters in future at regular periods. My late omissions have arisen from my being almost wholly occupied, either in the woods of Maine, with the General Court, or at Taunton where the death of my brother has compell'd my attendance for the adjustment of his estate.

I am now only waiting for a passage to Gouldsboro', which I expect in two or three days, to return to that place

[No signature]

Bingham to Cobb, London, 6 October 1802 [CP]

London October 6th 1802

Dear General:

I received your letter of the 11th April 1802 in reply to mine of the 20 and 30 June, 8 and 20 July, and 1 August 1801.

It was exposed to a very long detention on the route, as I did not receive it untill a considerable period had elapsed, after the date.

² Apparently this exchange was never made. See the map, made about 1818, facing page 862, on which No. 23 does not appear as part of Bingham's property.

I made but a short reply, enclosing a letter to General Jackson, renouncing in the most explicit terms whatever right I might be presumed to have, or interest, or claim, in or concerning the contract made with the State for the lands to the north of the Lottery Townships.

I waited for the further and regular communications which you had promised me, after your arrival at Gouldsborough, in order to have a fuller view of the existing state of the property and its future prospects, previous to my reply to your letter.

But I have been entirely disappointed in my expectations, as from your various avocations having absorbed your time, or some other cause, I have not received any of your favors since that of 11 April. My only source of information is derived from the advices which Messrs. Hope receive.

I observe you have laid open a road from the Mariaville settlement in No. 20 to the Penobscot River. I do not find that the parties thro whose lands it passed, contributed towards this improvement. The small number of farming families at the settlements you have established, and the considerable expence at which they have been procured, evidently shows that these lands are as yet in little demand, and that the intermediate space must be filled up to the westward, before there will be any great emigration to our Penobscot tract.

As the emigrants travel from the westward, they will be always intercepted before they reach our more distant possessions, and if the road of communication with the Penobscot is not much used, it will in a short time, by a second growth of trees and shrubs, be rendered unfit for travelling. This objection applies to making any road, that there is not a moral certainty of being much frequented.

I observe what you mention as relative to the Kennebec tract. In some former letters, I fully communicated to you my opinions as relative to my views concerning these lands.

We have reason to regret that the greater facility in settling them, by the ease with which settlers might be procured, was not foreseen, at an earlier period, as the same amount of expenditure, disbursed on this property, as has been devoted to the other tract, would probably have produced the requisite number of settlers, to exonerate me from any obligation towards the State.

The arrangement which you recommend would press too hard upon my finances, which are not in a situation to support it. It is unfortunate that the same opinions cannot be impressed upon others, which some of my friends entertain with respect to the value of this property. If such

was the case, it would not be difficult to procure a cooperation and partnership in the expences, and a relief from the very heavy advances I have made for the purchase of this property which with the accumulating interest, forms an immense sum.

I am very anxious to adopt measures to facilitate my views of bringing forward this property, but it has unfortunately been exposed to misrepresentation, and it will take some time to eradicate the prejudices entertained concerning it.

If you think the exchange of a portion of the strip of land to the northward of the Lottery Townships for the township No. 23, East Division, which was omitted to be conveyed in the deeds, will be advantageous, you have my assent in making it. If it was ceded on the terms of the original purchase, does Mr. Richards suppose that his constituents would find it their interest to take a moiety of it, at the price they paid for the other portion of what they bought?

I herewith send you a copy of the letter addressed to General Jackson.

I have not all the materials at hand which are necessary to the examination of the accounts you have transmitted me, which I shall more particularly attend to at a future day.

They are not kept in the manner most easy to comprehend, but they may easily be brought into proper order. The various sums which have been advanced from time to time, will form an aggregate amount, to balance which, will come forward the different expenditures for specific purposes, which with the balance of active capital and property on hand, will equal the said advances.

I am surprized to find you do not notice the printed statement I sent you, relative to the law suit against the United States in Massachusetts and in which I appeared as a *formal defendant*, for the United States made themselves the *real defendants*, when, in their Resolutions of June 20, 1780, "they pledged themselves to pay to the plaintiffs, all such sums of money as they might recover in this action." Now when they have obtained final judgment, by means the most astonishing, considering who the parties were, which had recourse to them, they refuse to apply to the Government who promised to pay (and which promise of its responsibility was frequently confirmed to the council by Colonel Pickering), and urge me to satisfy the judgment, under a threat of exposing my Maine Lands to execution. My agents are thereby put to an immense inconvenience in raising so large a sum of money, which I must, in case they are compelled to pay it, have refunded by the United States, who, on an investigation of the subject will find that if all the testimony offered on their part had not been

rejected in the trial, the parties would not have had the most remote chance of recovery.³

The change in the administration of the government is the reason why the parties decline an application to the United States, who have so solemnly pledged themselves to pay the amount of the judgment. But this will not prevent the examination of the means by which it was obtained, and an accurate attention to the conduct of all who were connected with the suit, in the different stages of its proofs. Surely Mr. Ames has not been consulted on this subject, as he expressed in his letters to me a very great concern at some of the prominent points, relative to this suit, being known to the new administration, and when Colonel Pickering had expressed his astonishment that the United States or myself should be exposed to any further trouble, in a case which had been so often adjudicated (in his letter to Mr. Davis of the 5 March, 1799), I also wrote to General Knox to inquire what could be the cause of so much difficulty in so simple a case. His reply of April 17 unfolds the reason, and for the honor of the party who was council for the United States officially I shall not now mention it, as it would very deeply implicate him and some of the other council who chose to presume that I was personally interested in the event, and to make indirect overtures accordingly,⁴ whereas the very money which had been advanced to council in the first action in 1780, by my agent, had been refunded by Congress, and Colonel Pickering had repeatedly informed the council of the U.S., previous to this period, that the United States were responsible (and of course to pay, and not me). It was not until my character was attacked by malicious and slanderous reports, in consequence of the rejection of all the evidence which justified and approved it, that I expressed an anxiety on the subject of the suit, as well as for the result thereof, as affecting the interests of the United States. My interference has arisen from my public character, as an agent of the United States, and I will undertake to say that the publication of every letter I have ever written or received on the subject of this cursed business will tend to exhibit my conduct as perfectly correct and proper, as I never for a moment lost sight of my being a trustee, approved of in that capacity by Congress, and holding a balance in my hands, "to be paid to whoso-

³ There is in CP a *Scire Facias* dated Salem, 2 February 1802, ordering Bingham to appear in court and show cause why the judgment should not be executed.

⁴ I have found no trace of Knox's reply in either BP or KP. However, in Bingham to Knox, Philadelphia, 23 April 1799, KP, XLII. 76, Bingham discusses the propriety of paying John Davis, even though he is employed by the United States, and says, at one point, "However, I shall take your hint and remit Mr. Davis a handsome fee—entre nous." This seems to indicate that Knox had suggested greasing Davis's palm.

ever it belonged, according to the orders and decisions of Congress" and that before I could exonerate myself from this charge, the terms which it imposed upon me must be complied with.

In narrowly watching the progress of this suit, the motives and views of the parties, the means they had recourse to, and their endeavors to manœuvre me into an acceptance of their insidious overtures, were not unobserved, and the cooperation of persons in their plans, who ought not, because from their relative situation it was not decent and becoming to perform such agency, did not escape me, and of which I am in possession of written testimonials.

After having created such prejudices in Massachusetts as, by the acknowledgment of the best informed characters, to prevent the possibility of a fair trial, unwearied pains have been taken to make the same impression on some of the officers of the government. This Mr. Hare writes me. But my consolation is, *magna est veritas et prevalebit*.

I have wrote to him not to pay this judgment untill compelled thereto, in order to prevent the sale of the Maine Lands, and to make no compromise which after obtaining the judgment, they were offering to him, without the most explicit directions on the part of the government.

The removal of all the executive officers who were acquainted with the nature and progress of this business, the prejudices which have been instilled into those who have succeeded them, and the entire unacquaintance with the merits of the case on the part of my agents, expose me to much more difficulty than I had any reason to expect. I thought the simple statement of facts, copy of which I sent you, would have been amply sufficed [*sic*]. I now find that a more voluminous publication will be necessary, with all the documents and correspondence attached to it.

I mention these circumstances to you confidentially, fully persuaded of your making use of them with your usual discretion. No one can be more anxious to be exonerated from an obligation than I have invariably been to pay the balance of monies in my hands, to those who may have a right to receive it, but if more is extracted from me, than I have ever received, I must necessarily recover it back, and expose the means by which it has been forced from me.

I shall write to Mr. Hare to remit you the \$1,000 you have occasion for, by a draft on the Branch Bank. If Mr. Codman draws upon me, it will be attended with a commission of 2½ per cent in negotiating his bill.

I hope you will be able to obtain from the General Court an entire exoneration from the demands for the settling duties. Considering the efforts we have made, the expences we have incurred, and the impossi-

bility of forcing settlers into a country which is not ripe to receive them, I think the legislature on a fair view of the subject, will be disposed to be indulgent. Your influence and management will effect a great deal whenever this question is agitated.

If I could meet with a convenient direct opportunity, I would send you a variety of machinery which would be very usefull in a young newly settled country.

You have not as yet informed me the impression which peace will probably make on the commercial pursuits of the District. Wood of all kinds is extremely high in every part of Europe.

Should any attempt to sell the Maine Lands under the judgment be made, or any circumstances of an interesting nature come to your knowledge, relative to this suit, I will thank you to communicate the information to Mr. Hare.

I forgot to mention to you that since my arrival in Europe, I have discovered that the plaintiffs to the suit had obtained in July 1793, proof of the cargo in question being British property, by means of some queries they addressed to the shippers of the cargo, who candidly made the acknowledgment. They never before possessed any testimony to this effect, and I never, untill lately, knew that they were in possession of it, for they had their reasons for concealing it.

You will before this have heard that my daughter Maria is married to Mr. Baring's brother Henry, a connection in every respect highly gratifying.⁵ The interest you have always kindly taken in what regards my family, induces me to mention the circumstance to you.

My best compliments to your family and to General Knox and General Jackson as well as Mr. Richards.

Yours sincerely
WM. BINGHAM

Samuel Thatcher⁶ to Cobb, Washington, 16 January 1803 [CP]

Sir: Washington January 16th. 1803

I take the liberty to address you respecting the separation of Maine

⁵ On Bingham's daughter Maria and her escapades, see M. L. Brown, "Mr. and Mrs. William Bingham," *Pa. Mag. of Hist. and Biog.*, LXI. 319-320, and S. E. Morison, *Harrison Gray Otis*, I. 136-139. See also A. Baring to F. Baring, Philadelphia, 7 May 1799, in BaP.

⁶ Samuel Thatcher of Warren had been elected a representative to fill the vacancy of Silas Lee. See W. Willis, *History of the Law, the Courts, and the Lawyers of Maine*, 225-229.

from Massachusetts. I consider the present an improper time to divide the State. I have consulted many Federalists and have heard the subject largely discussed here. They are all of opinion that we shall run a great hazard of becoming democratic. Every attempt will be made by the present administration to shake any part of New England, where there can be the most distant prospect of success. As we now are we are Federal in our politics, and shall remain so, but it is thought that if we divide, either Massachusetts or Maine or perhaps both will be revolutionized. It has been an argument in favor of division that we shall have two more Federal senators. This is by no means certain. When we shall call a convention, every petty town will send a delegate where as at present our representatives to the legislature are principally from the largest and most Federal towns. The consequence will be that a greater proportion of obscure and ignorant men will come forward who will naturally be inclined to democracy. Besides, there will be many causes and objects of contention resulting from the division, such as the choice of officers, the seat of government, etc. Whoever is disappointed will naturally become a Democrat. The current sets strongly that way at present and nothing but the firmness and ability of New England can serve the country. If Massachusetts goes there can be no longer any effectual resistance from any quarter. But if we ride out the storm we shall preserve the federal Constitution and shall be a rallying point to the Federalists at the southward. Two senators (supposing them Federal) would not make even one third in the next Congress, and could help the federal interest very little. Gentlemen of the first respectability here consider the measure as decidedly wrong unless there can be no avoiding it without giving great offence. I believe all the Federalists in the Massachusetts delegation are of one opinion respecting it. I have been requested to write to some of the most influential men in the District upon the subject, which together with the interest I feel in it will be my apology for troubling you with this letter.

However I consider it improper to assign these reasons publicly as it would promote the measure with the democrats. From what I observed when in Maine I concluded that the business would not be vigorously pushed. If it should be the request of a large majority perhaps policy will require that it should be done, but I know you sir perfectly competent to judge what will be best under all circumstances.

I am sir with great respect your

Obedient servant

SAML. THATCHER

P.S. I should not wish to defer the separation long but I think the state

of politicks will alter for the better in a year or two. Massachusetts at present is vastly needed as a counterpoise to Virginia and has more influence than she could have when separated.

Wilde to Cobb, Hallowell, 13 February 1803 [CP]

Dear General:

Hallowell, February 13th 1803

I have for sometime intended to address you on a subject, in which I take an interest in common with my brethren of the bar, and which must be my apology for the liberty I am taking in offering you a few suggestions upon a matter of which I am very sensible you are the best judge. I refer to the unhappy situation of the county of Hancock as it respects the present derangement of the judiciary, and the various other evils which are necessarily dependent thereon. As you have a perfect knowledge of the state of that distracted county, I shall say nothing of what has fell under my own eye, or what I have heard from others. You are sensible, I think, that if a reform does not soon take place, the most deplorable consequences must ensue.

As I understand there is but little doubt that two of the present Judges of the Pleas will be immediately removed, and such measures are in train, that the other two will probably follow them in the course of another year, I think the time now presents [? torn] itself, in which the evils, so universally felt, may be struck at the root, for it seems to me beyond a doubt, that all the errors and corruption of the civil administration of the affairs of the county, are to be traced to the injudicious appointments of the judges. By corrupting the fountain head, all the little streams which flow in the judicial department have partaken of the same muddy and corrupted waters: the judges have held up a picture of depravity and wickedness, and no one can wonder that justices, coroners, constables, sheriffs, deputy sheriffs, etc. should be found ready to follow examples which are calculated to flatter the little dirty passions of the mind, and to promote what they may conceive may tend to their pecuniary benefit. You have it I conceive in your power, now, to be instrumental in reforming these evils, in two ways, firstly by accepting what will doubtless be offered to you, the office of Chief Justice of the Common Pleas, secondly by recommending suitable persons to fill the other vacancies . . . [torn]. I shall only, therefore, state to you a fact which may not have come to your knowledge, that your acceptance of the office is unanimously desired by all the gentlemen of the bar attending the court [? torn] in that county, and I might add by all the attornies and honest men in the District. I have

had the subject very often mentioned to me and I have lately been desired very particularly to state to you the wishes of the bar, and that their expectations of a reform rest almost wholly on you. After stating this, I am sensible that I can add nothing more but what will readily occur to your own mind upon reflection.

[Paragraph at close on family matters and signature badly torn]

Cobb to Bingham, Boston, 20 April 1803 [CP]

Boston April 20th. 1803

To William Bingham, Esquire
in London

Dear Sir:

Your several letters of January 1st. dated at Bath 1802, of March 7th., at London, with a duplicate of the preceeding letter, and of October 6th dated at London, of the same year, have been receiv'd. The several subjects they contain, I will notice in order. I am at a loss to determine what you would wish by requesting to have forwarded to you "in the form of documents, substantiating the value of your Kennebeck lands, as to soil, situation, surrounding population and susceptibility of settlement," as you have had communicated to you from time to time all the general information that could be obtain'd on the subject. More particular information never can be had of wilderness tracts untill settlements are made in them, and thence, since this has been partially effected, the reputation of this tract of land stands as high in the estimation of the people of that country as any other tract under the like state of settlement. Indeed their cannot be a doubt that its soil and situation is equal to any. The general population of the country has reach'd the southern line of the tract, and I think, in its whole extent. Settlements are now forming both on the east and west lines of it, and in three different places in the tract itself, viz., in the first township on the east side of the river, and in the southeastern and southwestern corners (in how many more I know not) settlers are making improvements, many of them without permission, and the repeated applications of settlers to purchase lands in the tract is the strongest evidence of its reputation and susceptibility of settlement. If it is your wish to have certificates of these facts from gentlemen of known character on the Kennebeck I will obtain and forward them.

I am very sorry that you have omitted forwarding a power for given deeds to settlers on the Kennebeck lands, as likewise to the surveyor who engaged, agreeably to your directions, to take part of his pay in land, and to the few whom Dr. Coney had contracted with, under your instruc-

tions. I have requested this for almost three years and particularly in my letter of April last. The promises that I have so often made to these people under your directions, that they should have their deeds, I shall be ashamed to repeat. This tract of land is growing every day in value, and much more an object of your interest and attention. In the same ratio will the malignant passions of man increase. You are already acquainted with my opinion on the subject of these lands, and you certainly cannot pursue a measure more conducive to your interest than the system partially adopted some time since, of disposing of them to actual settlers; especially as this business can now be done without the advance of a dollar on your part, and with a positive certainty that the nett proceeds of such sales will far exceed any sum that can ever be received by a sale in gross or to companies. At the same time the general value of the tract will be gradually advancing by the improvements thus made by the settlers, and any future large sales will command a much higher price than can ever be experienced from its present state. I am very sensible that your opinion on this subject has been different, but I persuade myself that on a review of it, you will adopt a measure that combines so many objects for the advancement of your interest.

The European peace has not been attended with any of those advantages to the District of Maine which you have anticipated, and lumber, which is our staple, is as dull now as it has been at any time within four years past. Indeed very few of the evils or benefits that were expected to result from the peace have been experienced. Provisions, excepting bread stuffs which have fallen a little, are at the war price and in demand, seamen's wages have fallen, but labour is enhanced, the general price of commodities either for consumption or export remain much as they were, and the capitals of our merchants united to their industry and enterprise enable them still to keep on float their immense tonnage, altho' commerce is apparently restricted. The price of ships however has fallen.

You have kindly mentioned the subject of the lands to which I am entitled by contract with you. This business has given me great pain for some time past. You may perhaps remember that you and Mr. Baring agreed when I was last at Philadelphia in 1798 that Mr. Richards and myself should deed these lands, at my request, to some third persons, who could then deed them to me, and you was to pay Mr. Baring for one half of the lands thus deeded at the price he paid you for them. Presuming that this business was perfectly understood, I apply'd to Mr. Richards the year after we went to Maine to join with me in a deed. He refused by saying that he had no recollection of any agreement on the subject. The

year following, 1800, Richards went to Philadelphia. By him I wrote to you on this subject and requested that the farm which I occupied at Gouldsboro' excluding therefrom the wharf and stores might be considered as part of the lands to which I was entitled, on my paying an estimated price for the buildings. My particular wish in making this request was that my family might have a place to reside at in case of any misfortune to myself, and I did not think it too great to be indulged with, considering that I am entitled by the same contract to a lot in Gouldsboro' which would naturally be a part of this farm, that the farm itself is at least one half a ledge of rocks, and altho' it cost in the first instance an extravagant sum, yet as it stood in the general sale to Mr. Baring it was of no more value than any other land. On Mr. Richards return he inform'd me that Mr. Baring had no other conception than that I was to have the land in one place, altho' my contract expressly says the contrary, and that you tho't the farm cost too much in the first instance—it could not be assigned as a part of the lands intended by contract. Thus this business has rested, and I have unfortunately the mortification to see myself, after near eight years residence in Maine, without a house to cover me or an acre of land. In whatever way you may prescribe to have this part of my contract adjusted, that way will be most agreeable to me.

Your law suit with Thorndike and others I had never any concern with, and I am in a great measure unacquainted with the dispute. All I recollect knowing about it was obtain'd from your printed statement that you communicated some years since. From that statement it appear'd that they could not have a colour of a demand on you, and how they have been able to obtain executions against you is a trick I am unacquainted with. I convers'd with Mr. Ames the last winter on this business. He thinks you have now no other remedy than paying. He wish'd to have had the business compromis'd as a much less sum would have been receiv'd, but that you dislik'd it. I shall be informed of the progress of this business and I will communicate to Mr. Hare.⁷

As the term for placing the whole number of settlers on the lands in Maine is now expir'd, it is perhaps necessary to determine on some mode of adjusting this business with the Commonwealth. On this subject I wish to receive your advise and direction. There are three modes in which this business may be bro't forward.

1st. To obtain a prolongation of the term for placing settlers on the lands.

⁷ Charles Willing Hare was a prominent Philadelphia Federalist who was closely associated with the Bingham and Willing families. When Bingham left for Europe, Hare became his agent. See S. E. Morison, *Harrison Gray Otis*, 1. 304-306.

2dly. An exoneration of the payment for deficient settlers, in consequence of great exertions and large expenditures to obtain the object.

3dly. A compromise with the State on the following principles: that the government, in demanding a forfeiture for deficient settlers intended it as a stimulus on the purchasers to effect the settlement, and not a means of obtaining money to the Treasury; that this intention of the State has had its full effect, as great expenditures have been made to effect the settlement of the country, but unfortunately without obtaining the object, and this had been occasioned by circumstances which were unforeseen and uncontrollable by either party and therefore each party ought to bear an equal proportion of the evil. Under these circumstances the purchaser submits to the wisdom and generosity of government, what in justice and equity he ought to pay, so as to lift his deeds now in es-crow.

The first mode I presume can be obtain'd as it has been usual with the legislature to grant it to others; and if the Kennebeck tract is laid open for settlements, the whole number of settlers may probably be obtained in 5 or 6 years. The second we cannot succeed in as our envy and avarice are too strong to carry such a measure; but the third I think we can on the payment of from 10 to 20,000 dollars. Not a word has been mentioned in the legislature on this subject since I have been in it, but as the time must come when it will be taken up, I have tho't best that you should be forewarned that necessary arrangements may be made.

I am now waiting only for a wind to carry me to Gouldsboro', and as my letter is already too lengthy, I must omit giving a view of our proceedings on the lower tract 'till my next, which shall be in June, at which time I shall probably be here again to attend the legislature.

Vexation, perplexity and disappointments have attended me for the last eighteen months in such manner that I have hardly been myself, chiefly occasioned by the death of my brother at Taunton, who had obstinately wrapt up in his property a portion of my Fathers estate, to whose will I was the executor. Law suits and references have at last liberated me in a great measure from this trouble. This with others has occasioned the omission of my correspondence for the last year. My last letter was of the 11th of April last. Indeed my mind has been too much disturbed to have afforded you any usefull communications. I shall endeavour in future to give you letters regularly.

The enclosed concern account I receiv'd from Mr. Richards the last winter. My private and loan accounts will be transmitted in my next.

I have receiv'd from Mr. Hare 1,300 dollars on account of my stipend

for this year now almost past. The remaining 200 dollars will be carried to private and loan accounts.

Mr. Black, the last fall, was married to the only daughter I have left, and they are at house keeper [*sic*] in our little neighbourhood at Gouldsboro'.⁸ Please to remember me respectfully to Mr. Baring and Mrs. Baring, and believe me ever with esteem,

Your friend and obedient servant

D. COBB

William Bingham, Esquire
To the care of Sir Francis Baring
Baronet and Co., Merchants, London

Cobb to Hare, Boston, 8 June 1803 [CP]

Boston June 8th. 1803

Dear Sir:

Your letter of the 1st instant⁹ was received the day before yesterday. Soon after the receipt of yours of the 13th of March last,¹ with its enclosure of 1,300\$ of Post Notes, I returned to Maine, and in the hurry of my arrangements at that time, I had forgot that I had omitted a letter of acknowledgement.

On my late arrival at this place, I had a conversation with Mr. Thordike, who is the chief agent in prosecuting the unhappy suit against Mr. Bingham, who inform'd me that on his recovery of final judgement here, he wrote on to Philadelphia to be inform'd whether a judgment obtain'd in the courts of this Commonwealth could be sued out in that state, as his intention was to transfer the demand there, that he might levy his execution on Mr. Bingham's property in that city. This day he has been with me and says he receiv'd his letter, the last evening, from Philadelphia that informs him that he can sue the judgment of our courts in that State, but that it will take three years before he can obtain execution. This had determined him to proceed in making his levy on Mr. Bingham's Million Acres on the Kennebeck, and he came now to give me the information that I might, as Mr. Bingham's agent, appoint one of the three appraisers that are required by law. He is to call again to morrow when the business will be finally adjusted. You may rely upon it, that every cautious and

⁸ This was Cobb's daughter Mary, the grandmother of George Nixon Black, who gave the Cobb Papers to our Society.

⁹ In this letter, in CP, Hare speaks of the coming attachment of the Kennebec lands and urges Cobb to try to obtain a fair appraisal.

¹ This letter is also in CP.

prudent measure shall be persued in this business. Mr. Thorndike and myself are on the best terms, and I think it probable we shall agree upon such gentlemen as appraisers that I think will do justice to Mr. Bingham. I shall consult Mr. Otis this evening.

From some expressions in Mr. Bingham's last letter to me, I was in hope this cursed business was intended to have been settled in a different manner thro' you, or some other of his friends at Philadelphia or Baltimore, as it must have an unpleasant effect on Mr. Bingham's property in Maine. When Mr. Thorndike first call'd upon me, I intimated to him that I tho't it probable Mr. Bingham had made arrangements for the payment of his demand, and thence there was no necessity of being in haiste in levying his execution. His answer was that if security could be given for the payment of the money with interest in five, seven or ten years he should be perfectly satisfied.

Before I return to Maine I shall give you what may be our final arrangement; in the meantime I have to request, if agreeable, that 750 dollars as part of my stipend for this year may be forwarded to me in Post Notes or otherwise, so as to arrive here before the 20th. instant.

I shall be happy at all times to receive your communications and without apology

I am sir with esteem

Your most obedient servant

D. C.

Charles W. Hare, Esquire

Hare to Cobb, Philadelphia, 13 June 1803 [CP]

Philadelphia June 13. 1803

Dear Sir:

I have been favored with yours of the eighth.

Nothing could be more agreeable to me than Mr. Thorndike's venturing his judgment in this State or any where out of Essex County in Massachusetts. If he is really desirous of obtaining a judgment here, he may bring his action in the Circuit Court of the United States and obtain a trial in the course of one year after which, if he succeeds, judgment and execution will follow immediately. But he is too well advised to believe that the record of his suit, if it sets forth the facts of the case at all, can be supported any where except in Massachusetts, where in my humble opinion as much flagrant injustice has been practiced as has been ever known in this country.

You may be perfectly persuaded that Mr. B. so far from contemplating any arrangement for the payment of this judgment, is most obstinately

and inflexibly bent upon resisting it till the last moment. A Writ of Error will now be sued out from the Supreme Court of the United States and every exertion made there to arrest the proceedings of the plaintiffs. Even if *there* they should be successful they may probably find themselves in a new difficulty of which they are at present however but little aware. The course which they should adopt is to apply to Congress for the ballance of the monies in Mr. Bingham's hands and for the indemnification which the Resolutions of Congress promise. If they were to unite their efforts with ours for this purpose I have little doubt that the whole sum would be recovered from government, for the chief obstacles I have found there have arisen from the malignant misrepresentations made by the plaintiffs in Massachusetts.

Such a measure could not possibly affect any rights of which they may suppose themselves possessed. It certainly could in no respect invalidate their judgment against Mr. Bingham, in case the adverse politics of the day should cause a refusal from Congress to act on the subject. All measures could then be resorted to that are now in contemplation. Mr. B.'s feelings which in the progress of the business have been cruelly hurt would be healed, and the plaintiffs would have the prospect of receiving cash for their claims instead of Maine Lands.

In the course of a few days I will remit you the 750 dollars according to your desire.

I remain sir with high respect
Your most obedient servant
C. W. HARE

General Cobb

Cobb to Bingham, Boston, 24 June 1803 [CP]

William Bingham, Esquire
London
Dear Sir:

Boston June 24th. 1803

Agreeably to my last letter, under date of the 20th. April last, I shall proceed to detail our proceedings at the different settlements on the tract.

The road from the Penobscot River to Mariaville is now in constant use by the intercourse of emigrants, and the inhabitants of the former with our settlement at the latter. This road is the entry port to our lands, and our present experience compleatly justifies the measure of cutting it. Mr. Jarvis, thro' whose land it partly runs, promis'd to pay his proportion of the expence of making it, but his embarrassments must prevent any present advance. At this settlement, we have one of the best double saw

mills in the country, a grist mill and three families in the neighbourhood. Three more are now at work on No. 20 (Mariaville), and No. 26, part of which has been survey'd this spring to accommodate these settlers. These mills, after the difficulties are overcome that have ever attended such new settlements, will afford an annual income of 25 per cent. on the cost, besides giving us complete possession of the country, and facilitating our future settlements. The tide of emigration is just beginning to flow on the east side of Penobscot River, and it cannot be long before it reaches, in full flood the western line of our tract.

Our settlement at Beddington (No. 23, Middle Division), about 18 miles due east of Mariaville, is a farming settlement altogether and good progress has been made there, but some of the people who first undertook it and to whom we made large advances proved to be rascals. We have turned them off, and are now at some expence keeping the farms in order, 'till better fellows may come, and to prevent the least suspicion of a dereliction of the country two families still remain at this place. Our settlement at Annsburgh continues to improve. The saw mill at this place has been of no other advantage than assisting the settlers with materials for their buildings; the dam must be rebuilt and a grist mill created this year. I have heretofore mentioned that we contemplated a road between Mariaville and Beddington. This probably will be partially effected the present year, so that a communication may be had between these two settlements. At No. 19, Middle Division, two lots were settled last year, and the south west corner of the township was survey'd into lots. Others have engaged lots in the same township. Settlements of this kind will gradually advance northward from the old settlements on the shore, but the great torrent of settlement that will finally overrun the country, must come from the west. At Webb's Brook in No. 14² on Union River we intend this year to erect a small mill and make a settlement. Four families have applied for lands in that township and will probably commence their settlement after we have begun ours. This mill was to have been built the last year, but the contractor deceiv'd us. Webb's Brook communicates with two or three large ponds in No. 15, Middle Division, from around which the loggers cut timber and convey it down the brook to the mills at Union River, and in spite of our best regulations they will cheat us. We have tho't it better at some expence to stop up this avenue, rather than excite the warmth of savage temper by too many legal prosecutions.

To make good our past and present engagements we found ourselves under the necessity of drawing on Mr. Codman for 1,500 dollars, 300

² The present Waltham.

made after the boom in timber lands in 1835.

dollars of which Mr. Codman paid just before his death which took place suddenly the middle of last month, and the remaining 1,200 dollars has been advanced by Mr. Stephen Codman, the brother of John and executor to his will, for which we have given him triplicate receipts. I sincerely hope we shall not have occasion to draw on you again.

Soon after my arrival here at the late election in this Commonwealth, I communicated to Mr. Hare, Mr. Thorndikes intention of levying his execution on your Kennebeck lands. By Mr. Hare's letter to me it seems it was what had been expected. Thorndike is gone to Kennebeck to make his levy and Doctor Coney has directions to attend to it. Such measures are taken by the advise of Mr. Otis as I persuade myself will prevent any unfairness in the appraisement of the land. Dr. Coney was here at the time, and I gave him verbal as well as written orders on the business. He is an intimate of the sheriff and thence perhaps may prevent the ill effects of Thorndikes cunning and craft. When I receive an account of Thorndike's proceedings, I will communicate them to you and Mr. Hare.

You have frequently intimated your wish that some capitalists of this country would engage in your Kennebeck lands, but heretofore they have laugh'd at any projects I have proposed to them. Within a few days past, Mr. Mason and Mr. Otis,³ the first a late senator in Congress, the other you know, have been with me to know whether I was authoriz'd by you to make sale of your Kennebeck lands. I told them I was not, but if they had any propositions to make I would communicate them. They said that they should like to purchase that Million Acres, if the price could be made agreeable; that they would pay one half the money in hand and the other in six and twelve months with interest, or they would pay the whole in hand as would be most acceptable; and that if you had any person here that was impower'd to make a contract, they were now ready to make the purchase. The price they mentioned was 1/6 sterling per acre. My answer was they could not obtain it for that. I think it probable that you may obtain 40 cents per acre, if you have still a desire to sell this tract in groce, and if you have no prospect of a sale in Europe, I should recommend to you to empower some person in this place in whom you have confidence and who is accustomed to such negociations, as I am persuaded the time is now come when the surplus wealth of the country will be directed to land speculation.

I am again a member of the legislature and in the same place I have

³ Jonathan Mason and Harrison Gray Otis. Mason had had a long career in Massachusetts politics and had been elected United States senator to fill the vacancy caused by the resignation of Benjamin Goodhue in 1800.



Map of the Kennebec Tract in the 1830's. This map was presumably made after the boom in timber lands in 1835.

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³ Jonathan Mason and Harrison Gray Otis. Mason had had a long career in Massachusetts politics and had been elected United States senator to fill the vacancy caused by the resignation of Benjamin Goodhue in 1800.

been in for the last two years; and it is my particular wish that whatever business you may have with the Commonwealth, it might be adjusted and settled before I cease to be a member. The legislature finish'd their spring sessions yesterday, and this evening or tomorrow morning I shall depart for Maine.

I beg of you not to omit forwarding a power to Mr. Richards and myself jointly or to any other person, to deed the lands to settlers and others who have been promis'd lands, on the Kennebeck tract.

Castine June 28th 1803

Whilst writing this letter I was call'd to take my passage, which I had engaged for this place (my only conveyance), where I was obliged to attend the Supreme Court now sitting here. I must omit forwarding my private and loan accounts 'till my next, as I find my papers are at Gouldsboro'.

I must repeat to you the necessity of having some person who can dispose of your Kennebeck lands. The present moment is certainly favourable to your views, and if the former misunderstanding between you and General Jackson has not destroyed your confidence in each other, he would be as likely to serve you with honor and fidelity as any person.⁴

You have kindly mentioned your wish of forwarding to me sundry articles from Europe, if you knew of a ready conveyance. You may at all times with safety ship in the Port of London on board the ships bound to Boston any thing you may think necessary. Any new and valuable publication would likewise be very acceptable and for which I should wish to be accountable.

[No signature]

Copy to Cobb, Augusta, 3 July 1803 [CP]

Honorable David Cobb, Esquire

Augusta July 3d. 1803

Dear Sir:

The enclosed is a copy of the appraisal of a tract of land,⁵ belonging to the honorable William Bingham, Esquire, set off to cancel the execution in favor of Messrs. Brown and Thorndike, by which you will perceive

⁴ This refers to the quarrel over the payment of Tudor's note. See above, p. 1061.

⁵ Since this copy of the appraisal was sent to Bingham in England, and since Cobb failed to make a copy for his own records, I have been unable to determine the precise terms. Apparently the lands were appraised at something less than fifty cents per acre.

that a much larger portion of the Million Acres tract has been taken than we contemplated would be necessary for that purpose. It therefore seems to result [in] the necessity or rather propriety of its legal and early redemption. I embrace the earliest opportunity to communicate this information. Neither Brown nor Thorndike were present, Judge Bridge⁶ being employed to attend to this business as their agent and attorney, and who behaved very honorably thro' the whole transaction. The appraisers, tho fair honest men, appeared to conceive an unfavorable opinion as to the quality and value of the land. The effect however I presume will prove of little consequence as Mr. Bingham most unquestionably will redeem it.

Thier attorney appeared disposed to take a range or more of townships entirely across on the south line of the tract, but at my request, conceiving it would be quite improper to take the whole front of the tract, it was agreed to lay it off on one side of the river, forming nearly a square in the south east part thereof.

You will please to notice that we have reserved the lots and lands for the settlers in order that our agreements with them may be honorably fulfilled. And it would be particularly desirable if Mr. Bingham would authorize the execution of their deeds, a measure proper in principle and useful in its effects. To give a fair title to the soil while it creates confidence, ads solid encouragement to good characters to settle on the premises.

Accept the respect and esteem of

Dear sir, your obedient servant
DANIEL CONY

Cobb to Hare, Gouldsborough, 21 August 1803 [CP]

Gouldsboro' August 21st. 1803

Dear Sir:

Inclosed you will receive copies of Dr. Cony's letters and the appraisers return of the lands they sett off to satisfy Brown and Thorndike's execution. My absence, among the settlers, for some time past, has delay'd your receiving them earlier. I am much disappointed in the price fixed to these lands. We had no idea of their being appraised at less than 50 cents per acre. The appraisers are men of character, but they must have had prejudices as to the value of the lands, and I presume neither of them ever saw the interior part of the tract they have sett off. Many of the lots

⁶ Presumably Edmund Bridge of Wiscasset. See W. Willis, *History of the Law, the Courts, and the Lawyers of Maine*, 694-696.

that have been reserved in this appraisal were sold by my agent for a dollar and 75 cents per acre two years since.

Your letter of July 5th. was receiv'd by the last mail. The term of redemption of lands sett of by execution, is one year from the actual levy of the execution. I am not able to inform you correctly who are the parties in this suit, but I believe a number of heirs of some of the branches of the Cabot family are interested. You can obtain this information from Messrs. Otis or Ames.

It is of importance to Mr. Bingham's interest that these lands should be redeemed, and whatever actions may be bro't for the reversal of the judgment, for which these lands have been sett off, if successfull, will not give a repossession of the lands, but only the amount of the former judgement. It is therefore of consequence to redeem before the year expires.

I have inclosed the original copy of the levy, which I receiv'd from Kennebeck. As I shall therefore not have it in my power to forward a copy of it to Mr. Bingham, I must request you to do it.

It would oblige me if you could forward to General Henry Jackson of Boston the 750 dollars that I have requested. He has my directions to receive it. If agreeable, you may send it in Post Notes in his name. My partner Mr. Richards is going for London this fall.

[No signature]

Bingham to Cobb, Tunbridge Wells, England, 28 August 1803 [CP]

Dear General:

Tunbridge Wells August 28th 1803

I was very much pleased at the receipt of your letter of the 20 April (which must have had a very long detention in its way), as I had been so long deprived of any communication from you, arising from the vexation and perplexity in which you have been recently involved. It gives me pleasure to find that you are likely to be released from any further anxieties on that score.

There are several parts of your letters, as well as the accounts, to which I cannot at present pay attention, from not having the papers, to which it would be necessary to refer, at hand, in order to make a reply to them. I shall do it on my return to London.

When I requested the most particular information respecting the various advantages of the Kennebec tract, well authenticated and respectably attested, you would naturally conjecture it was with a view of making some arrangements for turning this property to beneficial account, in such manner as would be most conducive to the interests of the con-

cerned, and most consonant to their views, at the time the purchase was effected. I thought such documents more necessary, as this property however valuable and susceptible of rapid improvement, has a cloud hanging over it, from the unfortunate failure of our hopes relative to the immediate increase of value of the lower tract, in consequence of the operation of progressive settlement, for, it now appears to be candidly confessed on all sides, as the result of experience, that notwithstanding all the expences we have incurred, and the efforts we have made for populating this territory, that we must patiently wait untill the influx of settlers has filled up the intervening space, and the tide of population flowing from the westward, reaches us.

I was to a certain extent impressed with this opinion at a very early period, which induced me to be rather averse to making large annual expenditures, untill time and experience had convinced me that settlers could be induced to pass over the intervening country or to have recourse to a water conveyance, in order to fix their establishments in our tract, for without such an assurance, the funds that were expended must necessarily turn to little or no account.

If I could have induced the parties who became purchasers to have taken a concern in the Kennebec instead of the lower tract, there would have been a much better prospect of an immediate success. But unfortunately, no impressions of its superior advantages on this score could be made upon their minds, at that period, and at present, the relative disappointment in our operations on the sea side has occasioned too much discouragement to admit of their listening to any proposals which may be made to them, for a more extensive concern. And I am very apprehensive that others may have their desire of purchasing damped, by enquiries which may be made of the result of their speculation. Their hopes were originally too sanguine. It would have been better that they had been at first impressed with the idea that the progress of settlement would be slow, and that their advantages, as an investment of money, must be principally derived from the intrinsic good quality of the soil, its advantages of local position, and the rapidly increasing population of the District, which as it approached the tract, would proportionally add to its value.

With respect to undertaking this operation, single handed, with all the expences attending it, and trusting for reimbursement for those, as well as the heavy advances, which have already been made, to the slow and casual receipts of money from settlers, I must confess it would not suit my convenience in the present state of my funds, nor can I foresee, that it would conduce to my interest. Nor does such an operation pursue the

views and intentions which prevailed when the purchase was originally effected.⁷

With respect to the settling duties, I hope you will be enabled to procure an exemption, considering the large sum that has been expended, and the incessant exertions which have been made to carry the object of the government into effect. Even in New York, where the forfeiture of the land was made a condition of the non compliance with the terms of settlement, such rigid measures were never carried into effect.

They are only adopted, as a means of stimulating the efforts of the proprietors.

You seem rather to despair of this exoneration, from the operations of envy and avarice opposing it. The latter may be presumed to have its due weight and influence, altho in public bodies, such a propensity should not be indulged at the expence of a just and liberal way of thinking.

But what room can there be, for the existence of the balefull passion of envy? For calculating what these lands, with all their charges, originally cost, connected with the accumulation of interest and the difference in the value of money betwixt the period when they were purchased and the present moment, I think there would be no room for disturbing the tranquillity of the members of the legislative body, by exciting their envy towards the possessors of this property. I will undertake to say that so large a capital, under a discreet management, has seldom produced in any state of the Union, a less favorable result.

If an act of oblivion for these settling duties cannot be procured, enumerating the reasons which induced and which would justify the measure, then perhaps the next most eligible plan would be a commutation with the legislature, for a fixed sum, in lieu of the deficient settlers which might appear.

But if this could not be obtained on easy terms, or if a better temper of the legislature might be expected eventually to appear, then a prolongation for a certain number of years might be solicited, when a favorable moment might be watched, which would present a better prospect of success.

It is certainly very desirable to possess the deeds, which are lodged in escrow, as the title seems to be incomplete without them.

However as you are a member of the legislature and possessing a considerable influence, you will be better enabled to form an opinion of the expediency of the time when and the manner how the business should be

⁷ I believe this passage to be a very sound analysis of the difficulties and mistakes of Bingham and his fellow speculators in the Maine Lands.

brought forward and arranged, so as to insure the greatest success to the application, on which subject I shall be happy to have your opinion.

In my next letter I will give you a sketch of the first cost of these lands, with the charges of interest which have accrued, which will furnish you with the means of making a correct statement of the sum they have cost.

I cannot suppose that any additional expenditures will be made which will require advances of money for the settlement under your care, as in case of funds being wanted to a small extent, and the amount should not be supplied by the timber rents and the sale of lands, then the capital invested in the store, which is no longer the same object as when at first established, will supply the deficiency.

It is impossible to determine what impression the cession of Louisiana will make on the general interests of the United States. I do not suppose it will occasion any extraordinary emigration from the New England States to the westward. In the scale of national policy and individual advantage, the District of Maine presents very superior advantages for settlement. The Atlantic States have now a distinct and separate system to pursue, and every effort should be made to render their population more compact, and to prevent their inhabitants from being scattered over that immense western wilderness, thereby weakening the aggregate strength of the country, from their labor turning to so little account.

Our friend Richards, I find, does not view his prospects so flattering as he expected they would be, and indicates a wish of engaging in scenes of business that would promise to be more immediately successful.

Mr. A. Baring has gone to America to negotiate some important transactions for his fathers House and Messrs. Hope and Co.⁸ He will probably have an interview with Mr. Richards, as I know he wrote to him, previous to his departure, that he should be glad to have a conference with him.

I sincerely congratulate you on the marriage of your daughter with Mr. Black. Please to make my compliments to them, with my best wishes for their mutual happiness.

As I before observed to you, I have no opportunity of comparing the accounts of the present year, as received by you from Mr. Richards, with those of the preceding.

Nothing can show the unripened state of our lands more than the con-

⁸ This was in connection with the financing of the Louisiana Purchase, which the House of Baring handled. See A. B. Darling, *Our Rising Empire*, 520. There is one letter in BaP from Alexander Baring to the Hopes dated Washington, 31 October 1803, which reports on the settlement of various accounts with American correspondents and in connection with the Louisiana Purchase.

tinued state of expenditures, to form a few settlements, which in usual cases is supported by the purchasers who become settlers. House building department has been a very heavy expence, and I find no credit for any rents received. Beddington farm and Mariaville settlement absorb nearly \$2,000 this year, and at this advanced season of our establishment, when we might expect that our receipts would be at least commensurate with our necessary expences, I find that money in the year 1802 was drawn from Mr. Codman. The expenditures of this year amount to nearly \$4,500, independent of other charges, which are \$3,000 more. When I can have access to the accounts, I will place the various expenditures under different heads, so as to balance them by the money which has been received, which amounts to about \$30,000 for my moiety, including salary and the interest on the advances.

With sincere regard, I am,

Dear General

Yours, etc.

WM. BINGHAM

August 29 I have just received yours of the 26 June, to which I shall reply by the next opportunity, being too late for that by which the present will be forwarded.

Bingham to Cobb, London, 15 October 1803 [CP]

Dear General:

London October 15th 1803

Under date of 28th August I wrote you in answer to yours of the 20 April, since which as I mentioned in a postscript in my last I have received yours of the 24 June.

I am happy to find that the mills you have erected promise to yield so handsome a revenue for the money expended on them, added to the advantage of controuling the depredations on the forests by curbing the licentious conduct of the woodcutters. From the high price to which lumber of all kinds has risen in every part of Europe, it may readily be inferred that this article must every day obtain additional value in America, and therefore that it becomes an essential point to take the most effectual measures to preserve it.

Your account of the tide of population flowing so very rapidly towards you is very encouraging, and I am very anxious to see the best evidence of this improving state of things, in the rising value of, and demand for this property, for this is the criterion from which our partners in the association will alone form their opinions.

I observe that Thorndike is about levying his execution upon the Kennebec lands to satisfy a judgment for the most excessive damages obtained by man, the most disgracefull as it regards the evidence and the perversion of the most regular course of judicial proceedings. But as the suit is thus terminated, any further opposition becomes useless. I find from the copy of a letter which you have addressed to Mr. Hare that the appraisers have proceeded to sett off a portion of these lands to satisfy the judgment, and I never was more astonished than at the little value which they appear to have attached to them. However to this treatment likewise, I must patiently submit, regretting that you had not been personally present, to have averted the injury sustained by such an undervaluation of the property.

It now becomes necessary to make every effort to redeem these lands, whatever sacrifices I may be compelled to make, in order to effect it.

I shall in consequence write to my agent concerning it. I should have been much gratified if you had given me particular information concerning the process to be pursued in cases of this nature, as it would have enabled me to have given precise instructions on the subject, and having no source from which I can derive any intelligence, but thro your letters and communications.

As for General Knox, I have not received a line from him since my arrival in Europe, altho I have wrote to him very particularly, and altho I have rendered him an essential service immediately after my arrival.

However I do not despair of receiving a letter from you shortly, on the subject of this attachment, which is of so very important a nature to the interests of the concern.

With respect to the offer which has been made to purchase the whole of the Kennebec tract, I think it very incompetent [?] to the value which has been affixed to it, in the opinion of all those who have been acquainted with this property.

Taking the two tracts together and the various expences attending them, connected with the first cost and interest thereon, they cannot, from a rough estimate, cost less than 30 cents per acre.

And if an allowance is made for the depreciation of money since the period of their purchase, which is certainly as fair an item in the calculation as the original purchase money, it will be found that their offer is far below the first cost to the parties.

I am certainly very anxious to dispose of this property, as neither my resources of time and capital would admit of my entering into the business of settlement etc. with that spirit which is necessary to insure its success.

And from my residence at Philadelphia I am too far removed from the scene of action, to give that superintendence which so important a concern would require. Whereas gentlemen who are inhabitants of Massachusetts possess every facility of this nature, and therefore, as far as such views of improvement extend beyond my present engagements, I would wish to confine them to my lands in Pennsylvania, which are very susceptible from local situation, of being greatly benefited by a systematic plan of settlement.

As yet I have never offered any of my lands for sale in Europe, from a conviction that from the agitated state of Europe, much better opportunities will offer than now exist, which will be greatly increased from the importance which our country is daily gaining in the estimation of the most intelligent people on this side of the water.

If the offer which has been made had more nearly approached the real value of the lands, I would immediately have forwarded yourself and General Jackson powers to treat with the parties.

With respect to the latter person, there was no room to suppose that there was any alienation on my part towards him, on account of a difference of opinion which existed on a single point, each supposing at the same time that he was in the right. If any further communication should be made to you by Mr. Mason and Mr. Otis, I will thank you to inform me thereof, and I will immediately write you on the subject.

The time which I limited for my excursion to Europe, being nearly expired, I contemplate returning the next season, except some unforeseen circumstances should occasion a further detention. I shall then be able to fulfill your views, on many points, which cannot be so well effected whilst we are at such a distance.

Indeed my affairs essentially require my presence.

I find that you are again chosen a member of the legislature, and that you recommend an application to that body for an exoneration from the settling duties, whilst you continue in that situation. This would certainly be the most favorable time. My opinion is that a commutation for as small a sum as possible would be the most advisable mode of proceeding, if there are no hopes of obtaining an absolute release.

As you are chosen for two years, there will be time to write me more particularly on the subject, which I request you to do at all events, as your letters would be forwarded to America, admitting that I should have taken my departure.

I request you would likewise write to Mr. Hare and give him all the information on the subject and his mode of proceeding.

I have prepared some small publications and pamphlets for your perusal,

which will give you some insight into the present political state of this country, as well as of Europe, and which I will forward by the first direct opportunity to Boston. A military spirit pervades all ranks of people in this country, and the most active and energetic measures have been adopted to repel the invasion if it should be attempted. But I never believed that it was the system of Bonaparte to pursue this course, except urged to the adoption of it by imperious circumstances. He risks every thing by attempting such a coup de main. But, by protracting the war, he forces this country to an immense expenditure, diminishes its resources by curtailing its commerce, deranges its finances by increasing its debt, and will eventually create great discontents in consequence of such an adverse state of things, whilst his additional armaments are maintained at comparatively very little additional expence, having quartered them upon the dependent states which surround him.

I will thank you to give my compliments to General and Mrs. Knox and General Jackson, and remember me in the same manner to your family.

Mr. Richards, I find, is soon expected in England on a visit to his family, when probably I shall again hear from you.

I am with sincerity and regard

Dear General

Your obedient humble servant and friend

WM. BINGHAM

This letter from London was the last Bingham ever wrote to Cobb. In it he speaks of his intention to return to America, "except some unforeseen circumstances should occasion a further detention." In February, 1804, a most unforeseen circumstance occasioned a permanent detention in England, for on the sixth of that month, William Bingham died at Bath, at the age of fifty-two.⁹ If his absence in England had presented difficulties to his agents in America, his death was to cripple the whole speculation for years to come. The problems of settling his estate, picking up the loose ends of the enterprise, coming to an agreement with Massachusetts on the matter of settling duties, and revising the whole program for the development of the property were not worked out for many years. Indeed it was not until after the

⁹ See M. L. Brown, "Mr. and Mrs. William Bingham," *Pa. Mag. of Hist. and Biog.*, LXI. 323.

War of 1812 that the underbrush of individual claims, legal snarls, and political difficulties had been cleared away sufficiently to allow the trustees once again to get on with the central business of making the property profitable.

Bingham's death spared him the final humiliation of seeing the Cabots win their pound of flesh. The low price per acre placed on the Kennebec lands by the appraisers had meant that a large part of that property had been attached to satisfy the judgment against Bingham. There was nothing to do but pay up; and in May, 1804, Charles Willing Hare, acting for the Bingham Trustees, paid the thirty-seven-odd thousand dollars.¹ Though this payment removed a serious impediment to the promotion of the Kennebec tract, there still remained the problem of lifting the remaining deeds from escrow, let alone the old difficulty of getting people to buy the lands, before the speculation could be transformed from a liability into an asset. Bingham's death, therefore, was an important factor in delaying for nearly twenty years the development of the Maine property.

¹ C. W. Hare's report to the Bingham Trustees, dated Philadelphia, 1 January 1806, in BP, states that this payment was made.

Chapter XVI

1804-1820

THE END OF COBB'S AGENCY

ONCE the melancholy fact of Bingham's death had been verified, it became necessary to prove his will as rapidly as possible, so that his many business ventures in this country might be continued with a minimum of confusion and interruption. This task was rendered the more difficult because the testator had died abroad and because misunderstandings arose as to the proper procedure to be followed in Massachusetts.¹ Eventually these legal obstacles were overcome and there came into existence a very remarkable trust which, because of its self-perpetuating features, is still in existence today. Aside from some outright grants to his relatives, Bingham left his unusually large estate to his children in the form of a trust to be managed by five trustees—Alexander and Henry Baring, his sons-in-law, Robert Gilmor, his business partner, Thomas Mayne Willing, his brother-in-law, and Charles Willing Hare, a cousin by marriage. The trustees were authorized to sell real estate and invest the proceeds in American stocks. The provision for the election of new trustees makes the arrangement unique in American business history, and the Bingham Trust is believed to be the oldest private trust of its kind in existence in the United States today. The actual management of the estate devolved upon Charles Willing Hare, who acted as agent for the trustees until 1820.²

Aside from the Cabot Suit, which Hare had settled before the will was proved, the most pressing problem facing the trustees was that of the settling duties, which had been provided for in the original contract with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. According to the terms of that contract, twenty-five hundred set-

¹ For some of these difficulties, see below, pp. 1197 and 1202. The will was not proved in Kennebec County until 1809. See the copy of the Probate Certificate dated 24 May 1809 in BP.

² For an account of the Bingham Trust see M. L. Brown, "Mr. and Mrs. William Bingham," *Pa. Mag. of Hist. and Biog.*, LXI. 323-324.

tlers had to be placed on the Penobscot and Kennebec tracts by 1803; and one half of the deeds were still in escrow to insure the performance of this duty. The only alternative provided for by the contract was the payment of thirty dollars in six per cent stock of the United States for each deficient settler, and since these stocks were selling at close to par, the trustees faced the disagreeable alternative of either paying Massachusetts over seventy thousand dollars or risking the forfeiture of the whole property because the terms of the original contract had not been fulfilled.³ To make matters worse, this question was taken up by the Jeffersonians in Massachusetts, who sought to identify Federalism with proprietary interests and thus win the votes of the Maine squatters. If the Bingham contract could be voided on the ground that the settling duties had not been carried out, those residing on the lands in Maine might well get title to their property free, or at a nominal price, argued the Jeffersonians. Their case could be made all the more forcefully because the delay in proving the will prevented the Bingham agents in Maine from selling lands or giving proper titles, and the fact that the lands were owned in such large quantities and by out-of-state proprietors made the Bingham heirs all the more vulnerable targets. This campaign against landed proprietors was an important factor in explaining why the District of Maine became more and more Jeffersonian in the early 1800's.⁴

It was in connection with this political problem that General David Cobb performed his last important service for the concern. As President of the Massachusetts Senate from 1801 to 1805, Cobb was in a position to exert profound influence on the proceedings of the General Court. A staunch Federalist who, if anything, was too outspoken in his views,⁵ he could be counted

³ For these terms, see the original contract, printed above, pp. 47-53. The settlers had to be spread over the two tracts and a certain number were supposed to be placed on the lands each year after 1796 until the 2,500 had been located by 1803. See the sixteen original deeds in BP.

⁴ For a discussion of this political development, see W. A. Robinson, *Jeffersonian Democracy in New England*, 42-47. See also below, pp. 1189-1190 and 1193-1194.

⁵ Robert Hallowell Gardiner tells a story which illustrates Cobb's outspokenness. In the course of a heated political discussion with William King, Cobb said, "If you get into power I suppose you will hang all of us Federalists, and (with an oath),

on to throw his weight on the side of property owners. When William King, later to be the first governor of the State of Maine, introduced a motion to investigate all contracts with landed proprietors to determine whether or not their terms had been properly carried out, Cobb was accused by the Jeffersonians of using his position to kill the motion in the Senate;⁶ and while he was not in office when the final settlement was reached, the presumption is that his long acquaintance with Massachusetts politics was of great assistance in securing an arrangement favorable to the Bingham heirs. During almost all of the period from the death of Bingham to the outbreak of the War of 1812, Cobb was prominent in public life, either as senator, councillor, or, in 1809, as lieutenant-governor; and though his services to the proprietors cannot be precisely documented, the Bingham trustees could count on an influential and faithful advocate in the Massachusetts government during this difficult period.

In the meantime the General labored manfully to carry on his agency, handicapped though he was by his inability to give titles. He drew up summaries of the state of the Maine property for Charles Willing Hare;⁷ he kept an eye on Daniel Cony and the Kennebec tract;⁸ but for the most part he was obliged to mark time until the trustees could decide upon some positive course of action with regard to the Maine speculation.

Proposals of Nehemiah Bosson for Purchasing and Settling Maine Lands, Roxbury, 17 August 1804 [BP]⁹

Proposal the first. I will purchase one township of land in the first or south range of townships in Mr. Bingham's Kennebec Purchase at seventy cents per acre, one third to be paid in five years with interest, the residue to be

if we gain the election, we will hang you." A few days later a Jeffersonian newspaper announced that a leading Federalist had promised to hang the opposition should the Federalist Party win the election. See R. H. Gardiner, *Early Recollections*, 107.

⁶ See W. A. Robinson, *Jeffersonian Democracy in New England*, 44.

⁷ See below, pp. 1181-1184.

⁸ See, for example, Cony to Cobb, Augusta, 31 December 1804, in CP.

⁹ These proposals are included as among the few examples in writing of actual offers to purchase land. Nehemiah Bosson was doubtless a member of the Bosson family mentioned in F. S. Drake, *Town of Roxbury*, 154, 167.

paid in ten years. Instead of interest offer my services as agent to the proprietors. Should it prove inexpedient to employ me after the first five years then the interest shall commence, provided I shall have the privilege of leaving the employ at any time after the first five years by paying all that is due for the land; provided also that as the land will be mortgaged for security, and it being probable I shall wish to pay some money before it is due, the proprietors shall at any time release so much of the land as will amount to the sum or sums so paid, calculating at the same rate I am to give for it and the interest, the lots so released to be by me designated. I will obligate myself to get on all the settlers that are required by Mr. Bingham's contract with the Commonwealth.

Proposal 2d. I will purchase a township in the second range and give fifty five cents an acre, on the same terms and conditions as are stated in proposal the first.

Proposal 3d. I will purchase a quarter of a township in each of the above-mentioned townships or ranges at the same prices, and on the same terms and conditions, with this difference, that the whole interest shall be paid by my services, the land to be so located as will best answer my plans of settlement.

Proposal 4th. If none of the former proposals will be accepted I will undertake the trust of an agent, for five years and give security on the following conditions, to wit, for the first year 8 lots of land 200 acres each; for the 2d year 7 lots; for the 3d year 6 lots; for the 4th year 5 lots; for the 5th year 4 lots to be chosen by me, not to be permitted to take two lots together, to be settled as above.

NEHEMIAH BOSSON

Roxbury 17th August 1804

Nehemiah Bosson's Observations, Roxbury, 17 August 1804 [BP]

Observations respectfully submitted to the executors on the estate of William Bingham, Esquire

The price offered in my proposals for land may appear to a stranger too low, but when contrasted with the prices of the land in the vicinity it will be considered I think equal to the value. I know of one township in the Kennebec survey, between the Million Acres and Hallowell (the head of navigation on the Kennebec) and at a convenient distance from the latter place, now on sale at fifty cents per acre cash; and another township in the fourth range north of the Waldo Patent and at a convenient distance from the Kennebec and Penobscot marketts, offered for a dol-

lar an acre on credit and is an extraordinary good township; in the Sandy River country, towards the southwest corner of the Million Acres and within one days ride of Hallowell, the land is sold in the new towns at one dollar an acre, and it is the highest price asked in any new town within my knowledge. The purchasers have a choice of lots on a very long credit. The large tracts of lands owned by General Knox and those in the care of General Cobb further to the eastward are valued higher because they are near the sea. The cord wood and lime stone on them are very valuable. The terms of payment I ask are long; but when it is understood that where there is one person who emigrates to the wilderness with money enough to buy a small stock, and provisions to support his family untill he can raise them himself, there are twenty who are in want of the common necessities of life, I cannot therefore think of paying money for land, when I am certain of being obliged to advance [*sic*] considerable [*sic*] sums for the support of the settlers. These settlers will enhance the value of the land, and put [it] in a situation to be sought after by purchasers who have ready money. What cash I receive for land will be paid over immediately, that I may procure the release of the lot I receive the money for, and be enabled to give the buyer a deed without incumbrance. I have not a doubt that after I have settled the land I may purchase agreeably to the resolve of the General Court, made roads, mills, etc., I can sell enough for cash and before the five years expire to make my first payment, being fully perswaded that the settlement of land will certainly make it an object to such as have money. To substantiate this it need only be mentioned that the same land, sold about the time Mr. Bingham purchased his and at the same price, now sells for cash at 5 and 6\$ per acre in a state of nature and valued only for farms. The reason is that $\frac{3}{4}$ ths of the town is settled. It is but a few years since that the first 20 or 30 settlers in a town had to pay anything for their land.

I now solicit the attention of the proprietors to that part of my proposals where I offer my services as an agent. I am not ignorant that General Cobb is an agent appointed by Mr. Bingham over the same land, and I should consider anything criminal in my offers that I did not think would meet the approbation of General Cobb. I saw him last winter and he then told me it was uncertain what would be done with the land, that if anything should occur that could benefit me he would give me information of it.¹ An agent to be on the land is for several reasons necessary: Firstly, there being a great choice in lots, the prices should be various, and the

¹ Cobb must have simply been putting Bosson off, for in a letter to Hare dated Gouldsbrough, 20 October 1804, in CP, Cobb speaks of Bosson as a cheat.

difference in value must be ascertained by actual inspection. Some lots are valuable for timber, some for mill seats. Secondly, he would sell more land than a person at a distance. Thirdly, there is a vast quantity of land valuable only for the timber. The river Kennebec and the numerous streams running into it afford an excellent opportunity to the lumber stealers (they are very numerous and so poor that it is only a waste of time and money to prosecute them) to strip off the masts and other timber, and nothing but the most active vigilance can prevent their depredations. This saving of itself will almost pay for a mans time. Fourthly, there are those who practice going into a new country, fell 8 or 10 acres of trees and the two following years get two crops and then leave it in an infinitely worse situation than a state of nature. The prevailing opinion is that the land is very rocky, has a large proportion of fir trees and other evergreens on it. There is a report that one surveyor went out in June and could not survey it owing to the depth of snow. Some flourishing settlements would put a stop to such a mistaken opinion. A proof that it exists is that General Cobb has given permission to all disposed to settle to go and take their choice of land for 1\$ per acre and only fifteen or sixteen have settled on the whole tract since 1784. This I was told by the settlers when I was there last autumn and also that the same number had settled before that time who where intitled to a deed from the State if they applied before last May. Although I wish for some of it I cannot recommend the sale of any land (to settlers excepted) in the first range, for the reason that it has on the south line five townships that are settling, some of them rapidly, where the proprietors have been at the expence of cutting roads, etc. If the second range is settled the first will rise nearly as fast as if a large part were sold, and leave some thousands of acres more to rise on the hands of the proprietors. If the original design of Mr. Bingham to settle Europeans (as I am informed was the case) should be persevered in, it is probable they will be placed as far back as possible, for the land nearest the markett will sell best to our countrymen. If the settlement of Europeans should take place, the second range should be settled to accomodate the newcomers with provisions, etc.

The preceeding observations are with defferance submitted. If the proprietors should think proper to employ me, I shall do every thing in my power to promote their interest. I presume when it is considered I have resided five years in the country, have made the settling of land my study, have an extensive acquaintance in the District of Maine, with the inhabitants as well as the territory, I shall not be deemed unworthy of the trust. The reward I request for my services I think moderate, taking into view

the trouble of making new settlements and roads, the increased expence of such an extensive territory to take care and give an account of.

Roxbury 17th August 1804

NEHEMIAH BOSSON

Cobb to Hare, Boston, 3 December 1804 [CP]

Charles W. Hare, Esquire

Boston December 3d. 1804

Dear Sir:

Agreeably to the promise in the letter of 20th of October you will now receive answers to your several enquiries contain'd in yours of the 8th of July and 20th of September last.²

The estimated value of Mr. Bingham's lands in Maine, must, in a great measure, be a matter of opinion only. Lands remote from settlements cannot be of any important value separate from *speculation*. Those adjoining to settlements, and those where settlements are approaching, are selling from 1 to 6 dollars per acre. As these tracts of land are very large (the lower or eastern tract, in which the Messrs. Hope and others are concern'd, contains between 1,100,000 and 1,200,000, and the Kennebeck tract 1,000,000 acres) only such parts of them as are contiguous, or nearly so, to settlements can command any price. Thence the average value must be less than smaller tracts. I should estimate the lower or eastern tract to be worth 1 dollar per acre, not to include the improvements we have made there, and the Kennebeck tract at 60 cents per acre—not that they would produce this price if bro't into the market, but they are very valuable property at that, to any person that can afford to keep them.

The settlements and improvements that have been made are chiefly on a part of the southern side of the lower tract, but they are made generally by such characters as lumbermen and fishermen, who by their improvements add but little more value to adjoining lands, than savages. On the Kennebeck tract very few settlements have as yet taken place. At the time of the purchase of this tract, it was near thirty miles distant from the general settlements on the Kennebeck River below. Now those settlements have reach'd the whole southern line of the tract, and some of those

² The three letters mentioned are all in CP. In Hare's letters he asks Cobb to review the state of the Maine property and also to give advice on how best to handle those who, like Knox and the heirs of Royal Flint, had claims on the estate. Cobb's reply, among other things, urges Hare to go slowly with Knox, since the latter's influence would be helpful in connection with effecting a settlement with the Massachusetts legislature in connection with the settling duties.

adjoining townships, having such numbers of inhabitants, have lately been incorporated into towns. The few lots that have been heretofore disposed of in this tract have been sold at 75 cents and 1 dollar per acre, by way of encouragement to the first that went on to a new township. As the Kennebeck lands are nearer to the great mass of the western settlements than the lower tract, the disposition for settling on these lands is greater than on the other. If Mr. Bingham had not, some years since, interdicted the sale of the Kennebeck lands to settlers, I am persuaded that by this time, hundreds of families would have been settled on them.

From the best information that can be obtained of such wilderness tracts, and as far as my own knowledge extends, there is no essential difference in the fertility of the different tracts, both being capable of great agricultural improvement; but the lower tract is a degree of latitude further south, is perhaps the best water'd country in the U.S., is nearly contiguous to the sea and is thence favorable for commercial advantages.

The annual expenditures on the property are at present small and will soon be less; but that you may have a proper view of this subject, it will be necessary to state that I was Mr. Bingham's sole agent for the Kennebeck tract, and that Mr. Richards and myself were joint agents for the lower tract. In the management of the Kennebeck tract I have always employ'd Doctor Coney, a respectable character who resides on that river, and have heretofore paid his account for services, which was regularly charged to Mr. Bingham in my private account with him. But since Mr. Bingham's departure for Europe no account has been settled with the Doctor, but I expect it here soon, as he promis'd me when I call'd upon him on my way to this place that he would forward it immediately. The ballance now due him may be 300\$.³ As no taxes are paid on this tract the annual expence cannot exceed 150 dollars. In the joint agency, we have had the management of larger capital which has been applied to a variety of operations, such as a store, making roads, building houses, mills, etc. Our annual accounts that have been transmitted will shew the objects and the amount of our expenditures; but as these are now greatly lessened, the proportion to Mr. Bingham's estate for this year, seperate from my stipend, will not exceed 1,000 dollars and this will be provided for out of the capital we have on hand. The present amount of taxes paid by the joint concern is about 300\$ per annum. Our joint annual account will be transmitted to you in January next, the usual period.

I have had no other offer for the purchase of land in groce but that of

³ When Cony's accounts were finally submitted, the total came to \$705.17. See Cony to Cobb, Augusta, 31 December 1804, in CP.

Messrs. Mason and Otis, which I communicated to you the last year. Mr. Otis has since told me that as there was no person here with whom they could form a contract for the lands, he and his friends had given up the object, and had devoted their capital to extensive operations in and about this town.

In estimating the residuary profits on 100,000 acres of these purchases, I have taken into view what would probably be that profit twenty years hence. This I have estimated, at the extent, to be 40,000 dollars. Then this sum reduced to the present time will give between 10 and 12,000 dollars. My opinion is that the last mentioned sum is the extent of the present worth of such residuary right. As my particular friend General Jackson at this place, Major Jackson with you, and General Knox have like claims on these lands, I have to request that my opinion on this subject may rest with you, as your request does with me.⁴

I presume I shall be excused when I mention to you the absolute necessity of having an administration on Mr. Bingham's estate in this Commonwealth; you must be sensible that no legal measures can be pursued with his property here without it. We can neither give deeds or make contracts, neither can I commence actions for the constant depredations that are committing on the property. It is likewise necessary that the powers of agency to Mr. Richards and myself should be renew'd. You have all the parties with you—Messrs. Willing and Cramond are the trustees for the European part, and a majority of the executors of Mr. Bingham's will are in and about Philadelphia. My powers of agency for the Kennebeck lands if agreeable should likewise be renew'd, unless the executors see fit to unite Mr. Richards with me in all these concerns in Maine, and which perhaps would be best, with a power likewise to deed the Kennebeck lands, at least to those settlers who are entitled to their lots, and to those few who had contracted for lands before Mr. Bingham stop'd the sale of them. I hope these several objects will be attended to in the course of the ensuing winter.

Inclosed you will receive my private and loan accounts with Mr. B. which are made out from the time my last account was transmitted to him and which I hope you will find correct and agreeable to your request.⁵ I am now going to visit Mrs. Cobb at Taunton 36 miles from this, where she has been during the past season and still remains in a low and distressed situation. I shall remain there for some time to come, during

⁴ For the settlement of these claims, see above, p. 384, and below, pp. 1215, 1223-1224.

⁵ These accounts are in CP, dated 3 December 1804. For the general expenses of the concern, see Appendix G.

which I shall write you on the subject of the executors petitioning our legislature in the ensuing winter respecting the settling duty contracted for in Mr. B.'s purchases, and lifting the deeds now [in] escrow, as well as on the final adjustment of my contract with Mr. Bingham which expires the first of May next. Whatever communications you may make, may be directed to me at this place. The post master has directions to forward them to Taunton.

If you have no map, among Mr. B.'s, of the lands in Maine, I will request Mr. Richards to copy one for you during the winter, as we have but one in our possession.

I am, dear sir

Your obedient servant

D. COBB

Richards to Hare, Gouldsborough [?], 2 January 1805 [CP]

January 2. 1805

Dear Sir:

I had the pleasure of receiving yours of the 10th ultimo⁶ by the last post, and being strongly in the same sentiment with yourself that no time should be lost in pushing for a liberation of the deeds, I answer by return of post, and enclose a hasty rough-drafted Memorial for your inspection,⁷ with a request that you will point out by letter to General Cobb at Boston what alterations you deem fit. And I shall by this opportunity transmit a duplicate to him requesting *him* to make any alterations he may deem necessary and to forward the instrument so prepar'd to Philadelphia for your signature with that of the other trustees if they approve. I have adopted this measure to save time.

So very many reasons concur to render further delay in this business highly injurious, and among the rest the increase of Jacobinism in Massachusetts not the least, that I hope the business may *be got thro' this winter*. In sketching the Memorial I have kept in view that temper which will be bro't in opposition to us, and mention it as a petition of the heirs instead of proprietors, people being more naturally dispos'd to lean favourably toward *heirs*, and not so likely to transfer a political enmity or jealousy to the inheritors of a divided property.

⁶ This probably refers to a letter of the same date addressed to Cobb which is in CP. In this letter Hare urges the preparation of a Memorial to the Massachusetts legislature on the subject of the settling duties.

⁷ This presumably refers to the document printed immediately after this one, though there may have been several other drafts as well.

Mr. Baring is of opinion that a well-drawn Memorial sufficiently explanatory of the state of the concern must obtain a complete remission. With regard to myself I never had an opinion on the subject, having liv'd entirely unconnected with all state politics. Neither was I possess'd of General Cobb's ideas upon the subject untill my return from England.⁸ He thinks there can be no well-founded hope of an entire remission but that for a sum of money down, to an amount of which he of course will inform you, the deeds may be obtain'd.

Availing myself therefore of both your ideas upon the subject I have to propose that a Memorial something resembling the enclos'd be presented, and, if rejected, a proposal to be made for — dollars to be paid towards making the turnpike road from Portland in Maine to the Penobscot River, or towards a bridge over the Penobscot, or towards any public work the General may prefer, in lieu of the duties for settlement.

Herein appears to me to consist the whole difficulty namely, the *trying of the temper of the Committee* to ascertain the lowest sum they may compound for, or to invent some commutation (the cheapest possible for us) and satisfactory to the public mind. I know of no person so well qualified for undertaking this as General Cobb, and his connexion with the lands in question affords a stronger reason for applying to him.

The loss of time in exchanging letters from this place to Boston or Philadelphia precludes my further etc. etc. etc. etc.

Draft of Memorial to Massachusetts General Court, 1805 [?] [BP]⁹

The Trustees of the estate of William Bingham, Esquire, deceased, being desirous of adjusting his property according to his last Will and Testament and being prevented from the same by the want of certain deeds of sundry wild lands in the District of Maine detain'd by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts not for deficiency of payment by the deceased, but for ensuring settlement on the said lands, and having enquired into the state of that property, present the following Memorial:

That WHEREAS a uniform system of expensive exertion in proportion to its success unparalleled in the United States has been invariably pursued for eight years, not only for the encouragement, but for the *forcing* of settlement, by which in Townships Nos. 20, 26, 23, 17, and 7, Middle

⁸ Richards had taken his wife on a visit to his family in England during the summer of 1804.

⁹ This draft was probably that prepared by John Richards, though it may have been a later revision. Neither this document nor a copy of it in CP is dated.

Division, settlements in the wilderness and some very flourishing have been created, the most remote above 25 miles back in the country;

And whereas the accomplishment of these undertakings has required great cost of money in bridging, causewaying, and roadmaking above one hundred miles, with running out of townships, building houses and mills for the accommodation of settlers, assisting them with loans, and in some instances pensioning them with salaries, with a constant strain of exertion for the advancement of the settlement of the country by contributing towards public works, etc., and which system is still in progress, whereby a disburse of 70,000 dollars has been sustain'd in difficult objects, very few indeed of which are or can ever be productive, but solely for the purpose of rendering the country habitable and bringing on inhabitants;

And whereas the difficulties attending the execution of this plan have been most complicated and serious, and in its prominent points absolutely insurmountable since the limits of approaching emigration have not yet reach'd these lands, and the few inhabitants on the sea coast dissuade strangers from settling that they themselves *may retain the plunder of the forest, which the laws of the land have yet been insufficient to restrain and by which the property has been stripp'd to an immense amount of all its most valuable timber*;

Whereas the great demand for seamen of late years has diverted much labour from new lands *and the general character of these lands is unfavorable to settlement*, and the proportion of lakes and ponds upon them extensive beyond any comparison in the New England States;

Your memorialists not wishing to make an exaggerated display of their proceedings, but to deliver a plain statement of facts, and to submit them to enquiry, under a full confidence that the intent and object of the Commonwealth's, having been uniformly, steadily, and very expensively pursued for the advancement of settlement, will result therefrom, and presuming that the fine for deficient settlers was imposed in the spirit of legislative provision, and not of pecuniary exaction, they hope that the severe and heavy losses already sustain'd, by the large disburse, stagnation of value, failure of settlement, and indisposeable state of these lands will not be encreased by the infliction of that penalty, which in the event of shutting out settlers, could only have been justly deserv'd, and more especially as the Commonwealth has liberally given instances of relaxation from severer conditions to their purchasers, they pray for a liberation of the deeds.

1804-1820

1187

Hare to Cobb, Philadelphia, 3 January 1805 [CP]

Philadelphia January 3. 1805

Dear Sir:

I did not receive yours of the 22nd till the first instant.

I perceive that you have lately returned from the Kennebeck tract, that serious divisions had arisen among the settlers and others who were on our lands, and that you had deemed it necessary to bend the whole force of your attention to counter-act the ill effects that might result from them. In order that we may obtain more accurate information on these points than we at this time possess, I will thank you minutely to inform us of the causes of those divisions—whether they have existed among those settlers who are on the lands by contract or among the intruders only, whether the disposition to intrude continues, and whether the settlers of both descriptions would be willing to pay a cash price to any and what amount for the property they are now on.

While you are at Boston you can probably ascertain whether any and which of the capitalists of that city would be disposed to make purchases of us. I suspect that Messrs. Otis and Mason still contemplate a speculation of this nature and I think that without making any direct overture if they have such an inclination it would be desirable to encourage them in it. Altho' we are not under any positive necessity to sell, yet the various interests which have been intermingled in this concern induce us to wish to bring it to a close if it can be done without sacrifice. As an inducement to purchase it might be hinted that a long credit upon bond and mortgage payable with interest would be granted for $\frac{2}{3}$ of the purchase money.

It is the wish of all the trustees that whenever any proposal to purchase is made, you should immediately name a price, viz., one dollar per acre by the township and two dollars for smaller quantities— $\frac{1}{3}$ cash, the remainder secured by bond, warrant to confess judgment and mortgage payable with interest in three years. Whenever you shall have it in your power to make sales on these terms and shall deem it expedient to do so, we will execute conveyances.

I am desirous to know your opinions as to all the alterations which you would deem it expedient to make in the present system of managing the property, how far it would be practicable to turn upon it the tide of emigration, and to attract to it the attention either of the man of wealth, whose object it would be to make a profitable investment, or the actual settler who would intend to make real improvements.

With a very large tract of country held by Mr. Bingham in this state

I have thought sometimes of pursuing some such plan as this—of causing the whole to be surveyed into divisions of 25,000 acres, these to be re-surveyed into 3 tracts of five and one of ten thousand acres, of keeping the latter which should be the best, and of selling the former to persons who might be disposed to make investments of surplus capital, or to make retail sales to settlers. It would be useful I think for you to mention the objections which might arise to such a course of proceeding with regard to the Maine Lands, what would be the expence of surveying, management, etc., and whether purchasers on such principles could be found. Nothing of this kind has yet been seriously thought of nor do I wish you to mention to any body except Mr. Richards that it has been suggested, but in fact I am anxious to collect all the materials of forming an organized system to bring the property into action.

Mr. Willing and myself to whom the other trustees have delegated all their powers will shortly send to you a power of attorney sufficiently comprehensive to enable you to attend to every necessary object, and consider you as having agreed to continue your agency for the salary of 1,500 dollars per annum. And we respectfully beg that you will minutely and frequently communicate with us on the important affairs committed to your good management.

With respect to the fines for non-settlements our letter to Mr. Richards is I believe sufficiently full. He will act altogether in concurrence with you, and as unless I shall find it absolutely necessary, I shall not visit Boston this winter, it may be proper to observe that whatever you may do in relation to this business which we wish to bring to some determinate end will meet our approbation.

I beg leave further to make enquiries on a point unconnected with the preceding. I observe that you are one of the subscribing witnesses to a deed from Mr. B. to Messrs. T. and R. Willing in trust for Mr. B. for life and after his death for Mrs. Bingham, her heirs and assigns, for Lansdown estate. It appears that Mr. Bingham on his deathbed told Mrs. H. Baring that he had given that property to her by a deed of trust made to Messrs. Willings which does not we believe exist, and we think he must have alluded to the one I have mentioned. I shall therefore be very much obliged by your stating as far as your recollection will serve you, what took place at the time of executing the instrument, who were present, and particularly what Mr. Bingham said on the occasion. There is no doubt he was mistaken at the time of his conversation with Mrs. Baring, and it would be desirable if not useful to learn in what the mistake originated. I must rely upon your patience for directing your attention to one other

object. You doubtless know that many years since, a sale was made to Colonel Walker of a considerable body of lands lying I believe in the Penobscot tract, for which he gave bonds payable at different periods and amounting to about 54,000 dollars. The deeds were lodged in escrow, and as the payments were not made, Mr. Bingham contended he was entitled to a return of them. It appears however that Walker instituted a suit on the Chancery side of the Circuit Court for the District of Maine with the view of compelling Mr. B. to complete his title. What finally became of this suit I do not know. Mr. Otis I believe was consulted on our part and can probably state the result. As however I am desirous of bringing the controversy to a close, I wish you would ascertain in what situation it now exists on the records of the Maine Court, whether any and what decree was made, and whether the proceedings there will render it inexpedient to commence an action against the persons who hold these conveyances and who are in Philadelphia.¹ Requesting as speedy an answer as may be convenient,

I remain, dear sir

With very high respect, etc.

Your most obedient servant

C. W. HARE

I send to Mr. Richards by this post according to your desire, 1,000 dollars on account for your salary.

Otis to Hare, Boston, 22 June 1805 [BP]

Boston 22 June 1805

My dear Sir:

Among unanswered letters which lay in reproachful files on my table, I find the card you sent me in Philadelphia containing one hundred dollars as a retaining fee in Mr. Bingham's concerns which I hereby acknowledge to have received.

I presume General Cobb has advised you of the real and increasing embarrassments attending the want of regular authorization from the legal representatives of the deceased. The spirit of insubordination and enmity to the legitimate rights of property which is hourly increasing in the civilized parts of the country, is of consequence more violent and dangerous among the semi savages who steal land from non residents and hide from justice in the recesses of the wilderness. They are also convenient instruments in the hands of designing men who disdain not to en-

¹ For Benjamin Walker's connection with the speculation, see above, pp. 155-157.

courage their outrages and defend their depredations. In the last session of the legislature, a committee was raised to enquire into the state of the contract made with Mr. Bingham, which is intended without doubt as a preliminary to rigid measures. We have parried it for the present and may possibly do it once more. But if we follow the example of your virtuous state which we are in a fair way to do, I expect they will exact their pound of Christian flesh.²

I will keep you advised of events, and shall be happy to render you any services in my power, being with esteem and respect

Your obedient servant

H. G. OTIS

Hare to Cobb, Philadelphia, 7 August 1805 [CP]

Philadelphia August 7 1805

Dear Sir:

Since I last had the pleasure of receiving a letter from you, Messrs. Otis and Richards have informed me that a motion has been made in the Massachusetts legislature to enquire into the state of the Maine contract, that it was made by persons whom it is supposed will be unfriendly to our wishes, but that possibly it may ultimately produce a more favorable termination of the business than we could otherwise have expected.

In these ideas I understand you concur and it is a high gratification to us to be assured of the exertion of your talents and influence in effectuating our objects.

It is the opinion of Messrs. Barings from whom I have just received letters on the subject that we should endeavour to obtain a prolongation of the time allowed for procuring settlers, or an abatement (if possible a remission) of the penalty, or an authority to expend the money in improving the country. The first and second of these objects would be most desirable but are I fear impracticable. The third is so reasonable and so well calculated to attract the regard of the Maine members that I cannot but flatter myself with hopes of success. At any rate it is I presume necessary that the business should be brought to a close at the ensuing session of the legislature, and the attested copy of the will which has been sent over will I presume be deemed sufficient evidence of our power to enable us to treat. Mr. Otis has promised us his assistance and I hope the influence of Generals Knox and Jackson will be powerfully exerted in

² Actually the Jeffersonians did not win full control in Massachusetts until 1807.

our behalf.³ If you think my presence will be useful or necessary I beg you to advise me of it.

I have received proposals for the purchase of several townships in the Kennebeck tract.⁴ Will you be so obliging as to inform me what those lands may be worth, supposing $\frac{1}{3}$ of the money paid down and a long credit upon bond and mortgage with interest for the remainder.

Begging the favour of you to keep up a regular and frequent correspondence with me,

I remain, dear sir

With high respect

Your obedient servant

C. W. HARE

General David Cobb

Cobb to Hare, Boston, 22 December 1805 [CP]

C. W. Hare

Boston December 22d. 1805

Dear Sir:

I came from Gouldsboro' on the 10th of November, and by the way of the Kennebeck arrived here on the 17. instant. Your letter of the 7th of August and a subsequent one came duely by the mail to my house in Gouldsboro', but my absence in attending the courts of the county and in visiting the settlers on Union River and elsewhere prevented my seeing them 'till late in the following month; and then, as serious difficulties had arisen among those settlers and others that were on our lands, it was tho't best for me to bend my whole attention in counteracting the ill effects that might be the result. This has occasioned the omission of my correspondence with you. The difficulties I refer to have partly arisen from the death of our friend Mr. B. and had been fomented by the partizans of democracy to a troublesome, if not dangerous, height. They however have now subsided, and I presume with prudent and regular management will not give us much trouble in future.

The subject of the Maine contract that came before the legislature at the last session was bro't forward by the malignant spirits of our government for party purposes. As there was no danger of any important result, I tho't it unnecessary to trouble you at that time with any communication

³ Since both Jackson and Knox had claims on the estate, Hare had to move in a very circumspect manner if he were to win their support with the legislature and at the same time reach a satisfactory settlement with each.

⁴ This probably refers to the proposals of Nehemiah Bosson printed above, pp. 1177-1181.

on the subject. Our application to the legislature at the next session on this subject should be preceded with caution, and with the best knowledge of the principles of the contract and if possible a knowledge of the temper of the House of Representatives. It is certainly of importance that you should be here at the time, not only for your advice and direction in this business, but that Mr. Richards and myself may have an opportunity of conversing with you generally on the state of our concerns in Maine, which are unpleasantly situated. The legislature commence their session on the 15th. of next month, but they take up no important business in the first week of their session.

As I depend on seeing you here in all next month, it will be unnecessary to detail to you any of my proceedings on the Penobscot or Kennebeck tracts, further than answering your request as to the price of a township of the latter. The first and second range of townships, east and west, on the southern line of that tract, are now worth one dollar per acre at the least by the township. The lands further north and not so near the settlements, are of less value now, but if you have no necessity for a sale, the rapid increase of settlements will soon place them, if the lands are equally good, in as valuable a situation. One and two hundred acre lots, in the townships on the southern line can now be sold, I presume, at from 2 to 3 dollars per acre.

It would oblige me very much if you would make it convenient to forward to me before the 2d week in January, in Post Notes or otherwise one thousand dollars on account of my stipend for the present year. As I shall be absent for a fortnight from this place, General Jackson or Mr. Richards will receive for me any of your communications.

Since writing the above I have been favour'd with yours of the 13th instant.⁵ The two modes you propose in the adjustment of the Maine contract, viz., of compromising with the State for a sum in gross, or of prolonging the period for bringing on the settlers required, are perfectly my own, and one or the other I have no doubt can be obtain'd. The first however I think the most eligible, and I hope will be obtained at less expence than you mention. The last mode you propose, i.e., of having the money expended for the improvement of the country, and which is a idea you have heretofore mentioned, will be the least likely to succeed.

You have no occasion to request or to doubt of mine, or my friends

⁵ This letter is in CP. In it Hare outlines his plans for petitioning the legislature and suggests requesting that the trustees be allowed to spend the settling duty fines on internal improvements.

best exertion for the accomplishment of your wishes in the adjustment of your concerns with the Commonwealth.

If after seeing you here, you should think it necessary for me in the course of next spring to visit Philadelphia, I shall do it with pleasure.

I am dear sir with respect

Your obedient servant

D. C.

Cobb to Hare, Boston, 2 March 1806 [CP]

Boston March 2d. 1806

Charles W. Hare, Esquire

Philadelphia

Dear Sir:

Your letter of January 3d. came to hand some time after date, previously to which I had receiv'd from Mr. Richards the 1,000\$ you had remitted him for my use. Yours likewise of the 24th. ultimo has been receiv'd.

The subject of the deficiency of settlement on all the purchases of Maine Lands has been taken up in the House; and they have passed a resolve ordering all persons interested, to show cause at the next session in June next; this resolve is now in the hands of a Committee of Senate who think the measure dishonorable to government and I think they intend not to report upon it at the present session. If they do not, the subject is necessarily referr'd. Thus this business subsides perhaps for another year and I think with an aspect rather friendly to your wishes. Those who are interested in this business with ourselves, and they are numerous, are anxious to have a prolongation of five years to compleat the number of settlers required and to have it effected at the present session. They are now procuring signers to a petition, to which I have declined my signature. If they succeed we shall probably be equally benefited.⁶

The disturbances, as mentioned in my last, which took place on and about Union River, in the lower tract, were among those settlers who were on the lands by contract, and who had been artfully persuaded that they would loose whatever they paid us on their contracts, as Mr. Bingham's death had annull'd our powers of agency; and as his contract with the State had never been compleated, his purchases would all revert to the Commonwealth, if they could only git the Federalists out of office;

⁶ This may have been a reference to the so-called Pejepscot proprietors who were in the same position as the Bingham Trustees as regards settling duties. See W. A. Robinson, *Jeffersonian Democracy in New England*, 44.

and then whatever lands they occupied the government would give to them as settlers. These vile insinuations not only had the effect, among these ignorants, to prevent their compliance with their contracts with us, but let them loose upon the other lands from whence they have taken some of the most valuable timber in that part of the country. These trespasses remain unprosecuted for want of due powers for that purpose. I am persuaded that, being frequently with these people the last autumn, their opinions of their situation are changed, and I am very confident that the outrages they committed the last year will not be repeated, but the trespasses committed on the Kennebeck lands are to a great amount, and openly done in defiance of any power to controule them. I have procured the names of most of these plunderers and evidences for their conviction, that when the trustees give powers of attorney for the purpose, they may be prosecuted.

I have convers'd with different gentlemen who appear to wish a concern in the purchase of the Kennebeck lands. They all however go upon the idea that these lands are to be sold cheap, as they conceive the trustees would be very ready and willing to rid themselves of a concern in such troublesome property. Mr. Thorndike of Beverly,⁷ whom you know, is the only one who has made any proposals for purchase. He conceives that the trustees would think themselves justified, if they could sell the Kennebeck Million for the purchased price, including all the expences and compound interest, say 33 cents per acre, and perhaps he would include the adjustment with the State of the settling duties. If such terms as these were agreeable, he would endeavour to make a company for the purchase. My answer was that I presum'd the trustees would have no objection to a sale of the whole if they could receive a moderate consideration for the value of it, but that the price he had mentioned could not be consider'd an adiquate one. Mr. King,⁸ a member of the House from Bath, in Maine, who has been the great instigator and leader of all the measures in the legislature relative to Mr. Bingham's purchase, is another who would wish to be concern'd in the Kennebeck lands and this I suspect has been the source of his violent prosecution and rather persucution, of the subject of Mr. Bingham's purchases. He has proposed no price, but he wishes to be concern'd whenever they are sold. Mason and Otis apparently have no wish to be concern'd in these lands, but I believe they

⁷ This was Israel Thorndike, who had directed the campaign of the Cabots in their suit against Bingham. See J. D. Forbes, *Israel Thorndike, Federalist Financier* (New York, 1953). There is no mention of the Bingham suit in this book, however.

⁸ William King, later the first governor of Maine.

would not refuse a small share if the purchase was cheaply made, and their friends were concern'd. As the Kennebeck lands have frequently been the subject of conversation when General Knox and myself have been present, we have conferred together about the price at which they ought to be sold, and are of opinion that if 50 cents per acre can be obtain'd for the whole as purchas'd of the State, the sale would do, and if the future adjustment of the settling duties with the State could be included, it would do better.

I perfectly recollect my subscribing as a witness to a certain instrument said to be, as I did not read it, an establishment for Mrs. Bingham of the Lansdown estate; and I think no other persons were present at the time but B. and his wife, myself and, if I am not mistaken, the then Cleark to Mr. B. who was with the other subscribing witness. An establishment for Mrs. Bingham had been frequently the subject of conversation between them when I was present. He first proposed a township of land in Maine. This was given up in the sale to Baring and with a provision that out of the proceeds of its sale a purchase should be made for Mrs. Bingham, and I am well persuaded that Mr. Bingham told me that he had foolishly given too large a sum for the Lansdown estate that he might gratify Mrs. B. in her establishment. I never heard that Maria had any concern in the business.

Colonel Walker or Mr. Van Berkeell bro't a suit in equity against Mr. Bingham at a Circuit Court in Maine. Mr. Davis,⁹ our present Solicitor General, was Mr. Bingham's council. He tells me that at the return term there was no appearance on the part of the Plaintiff and the cause he presumes was dismissed.

It is of the first importance that I should have a conversation with you respecting the stated situation of Mr. Bingham's property in Maine and of my connection therewith; and if I hear nothing to the contrary I shall set off from here by the last of this or beginning of next month for Philadelphia, and I shall bring with me the annual accounts of our concern; and any subjects of your letter that I have not answered in this, I shall then be able to afford you such information about as I am possessed of

I am

[No signature]

I am just inform'd that the Committee of Senate to whom the Resolve from the House on the subject of the Maine Lands was committed, have

⁹ This was Daniel Davis, first of Portland and later of Boston. See W. Willis, *History of the Law, Courts, and Lawyers of Maine*, 111-116.

been call'd upon to make their report, and they yesterday reported not to concur with the House in the Resolve. Tuesday next is assigned to take this report into consideration, and if they concur with the House it is not of essential importance to you, altho' I had rather had it postponed as it appear'd to me the subject gain'd in your favour the more it was view'd.

Hare to Cobb, Philadelphia, 6 March 1806 [CP]

Dear Sir:

Philadelphia, March 6, 1806

I have just received and thank you for your letter of the 2nd.

Your presence here will I believe be extremely useful. Indeed I have long thought that it would be absolutely necessary, and that as most of the papers and Mr. Willing are here it must be in this city that all final arrangements will be made.

Mr. Thorndikes proposals forbid all expectations of his becoming a purchaser. Indeed I am now in treaty for the sale of the Kennebec tract at three quarters of a dollar per acre and if I can satisfy myself with regard to the solidity of the contractor I have no doubt that I shall effect a sale subject to the ratification of Messrs. Barings nearly at that rate. If the negotiation progresses I shall respectfully beg the favour of your immediate attendance in Philadelphia. Still however it will do no harm for you to encourage proposals for a purchase from whatever quarter they may come.

You will oblige me by mentioning the precise import of the Resolve which passed the House of Representatives—whether it called upon the land holder to shew cause why suits should not be instituted against them, or whether it contemplated any process for the recovery of the lands. Whatever may be the sacrifice to which we should be exposed by immediately raising the whole sum due I would incur it rather than suffer the title to the property to be put in jeopardy or suspicion. You will also oblige me by stating whether it would be practicable or expedient to procure a legislative authority to the officers of the State or to a committee to be appointed for the purpose to compound and settle the claim upon us during the recess of the legislature. I should suppose it would be more easy and advantageous to treat with a few select persons than with a popular body animated with various political and some private interests, and seeking to recommend themselves to their constituents by a zealous adherence to the terms of the contract. But on this head I am unable to form a satisfactory opinion and must rely altogether on your judgment. I will thank you to procure from Mr. Otis an exact statement of the forms to be

pursued previous to the proving of the will in Massachusetts. He will observe that it has already been proved in Pennsylvania not by the oaths of the subscribing witnesses but by witnesses to the hand-writing of the testator, which under the general construction of our Act of Assembly has been permitted in contradiction to the rules of the Common Law. He will also observe that the original will cannot now be taken out of the Register General's Office, at least not without the existence of some strong necessity, and perhaps not even then, so that it will be desirable that the probate copy should be received as sufficient. He will be so good as to state whether my presence will be necessary when the will is proved, whether actions for trespasses may not be maintained after the probate but previous to any oath on my part or taking out Letters Testamentary. In short I wish him to chalk out precisely the course that must be adopted.

I am dear sir

With much respect

Your obedient servant

C. W. HARE

David Cobb, Esquire

Willing and Hare to Cobb and Richards, Philadelphia,
8 April 1806 [CP]

Philadelphia April 8th 1806

Gentlemen:

Having in our late conversations with General Cobb¹ agreed upon a system by which it is supposed your future operations in the management of the late Mr. Bingham's estate within the District of Maine can be advantageously regulated, we now proceed to sketch upon paper the outline of the plan and to designate those objects which call more immediately for your attention.

Before you enter upon any other measures, it is doubtless necessary that the will of our testator should be proved in Massachusetts. For this purpose we understand that a probate copy of the will as proved in Pennsylvania is sufficient. Such a copy is now in Boston in the hands of Mr. Richards, and you will therefore be so obliging as immediately to ascertain and pursue the proper measures for effecting this object. We hope it can be accomplished without the presence of either of us, but should your inquiries lead you to form a different opinion, Mr. Hare will proceed to Boston with all the despatch which his occupations will allow of.

¹ Cobb had gone to Philadelphia in March, 1806, as planned, to discuss the affairs of the concern with the trustees.

After having acquired and communicated to us full information with respect to the mode of proving the will, we beg leave to request that all the papers which we now place in the hands of General Cobb and of which a memorandum is taken, may be put upon record and that after being recorded they may be speedily returned by some safe conveyance back to Philadelphia.

It thus appearing upon record that our title is unquestionable, and your authority complete, we recommend that one of you make a formal entry in the presence of witnesses upon each tract purchased from the State as well as upon all the lands purchased from individuals. The possession should be taken in the names of the trustees, and being properly done will at all times afford the necessary evidence with which to maintain actions of trespass and ejectment against the numerous intruders who infest our property.

After having adopted these preliminary measures you will find yourselves at leisure to attend to the following points:

First. To our situation as it regards the claims of the State.

On this head we agree with General Cobb in opinion that it will be expedient at the next session of the legislature to throw in a petition stating the immense sums that have been expended with a view to the improvement of this country, and the reasons why a greater number of settlers have not been procured, adverting to the causes which have prevented an earlier application, urging the difference between the penalty for the non-performance of and the real consideration of the contract, and soliciting an abatement or remission of the duties. After the petition shall have been referred to a committee, you will of course inform yourselves as fully as is practicable of the sentiments of its members and regulate your conduct by the information you receive. If one half of the sum due will satisfy the legislature and relieve the deeds, you may promise an immediate payment of it, and we will immediately after such an agreement shall have been formed remit you the money. If terms so favourable cannot be procured, a prolongation of the time of payment would be desirable, but in relation to this business we wish you to use your own discretion. You are much better acquainted with the nature of the business, and what is of more importance with the men with whom it must be transacted, than we are and upon whatever principles it is closed, you may be sure of receiving our approbation.

Second. To the subordinate interests with which our right is incumbered.

The debts due from General Knox to the estate of our testator are so heavy as to be much more than equivalent to the value of his proportion

of the residuary profits, nor would we now give for his right any thing like the amount of those debts if the money was in our possession. As however he is said to be in circumstances of extreme embarrassment, and as a recovery from him of the sum due cannot probably be expected from any other fund than the one to which I refer, we authorise you to compound our claim on him for his right to one third of the profits. In making this offer we go further than under other circumstances we should feel ourselves justified in going. It is therefore the utmost extent of what he can obtain from us, and should he reject the proposal we shall be compelled to press earnestly and vigorously for the money.²

General Jackson who is entitled to the residuary profits on 100,000 acres, has we are informed repeatedly expressed a wish to dispose of his interest. With him therefore you can easily enter upon a negotiation for this purpose. Should he be inclined to part with his right for five or six thousand dollars, we authorise you to purchase at that rate, the money payable in one year. But further than this we cannot go, and if his expectations are higher we must surrender all idea of making a purchase from him.

General Cobb has mentioned to us that Mr. Jackson makes a claim upon the estate to the amount of 3,000 dollars. As this is the first intimation we have ever received of it, and as we know nothing of its merits, it will not be proper for us to say more at present than that when it is presented and supported by proper vouchers it will meet with due attention.³

Third. To the contracts which have been made for the sale of parts of the lands, to the numerous trespasses which are said to be daily committed upon them, and to the mode of preventing these injurious proceedings in future.

Our powers which we herewith send you,⁴ will we presume be amply sufficient to enable you to execute conveyances to all persons with whom contracts have already been formed. We recommend that these conveyances be made with all convenient speed, so as completely to establish a character for perfect good faith with all those who have claims upon the justice of the estate. Altho the persons who have actually settled upon the lands without having formed any contracts cannot properly consider themselves as belonging to this class, yet where they have made improve-

² This settlement was successfully arranged the following summer. Knox's release, dated 25 July 1806, is in BP.

³ This probably refers to the old question of the Tudor note. See above, pp. 59-61 and 1061.

⁴ There is in BP an undated power of attorney to Cobb and Richards to sell land east of the Penobscot "jointly but not severally."

ments, we wish them also to receive titles at moderate prices. But with regard to those who go upon the property merely with the view of stealing the timber, we wish that prosecutions may be immediately commenced and actively and vigorously pursued. A few examples would probably suffice to prevent the progress of this great and growing evil, and we are willing to encounter every necessary expenditure towards the attainment of so important an object.

Fourth. To the sale of the Kennebec tract altogether or in large masses.

If a sale of this valuable but unwieldy property could be effected, we believe that the interest of the estate would be greatly advanced. Fifty cents per acre we think a fair and moderate tho adequate price, and should any offer to that amount be made, we authorise you to embrace it subject to the ratifications of Messrs. Barings. A lower rate might possibly be acquiesced in, and at all events we beg the favour of you immediately to communicate to us every proposal that is made with the name and character of the person from whom it comes. Should it be impossible to accomplish a sale of the whole by one contract, it may be expedient to endeavour to effect the object by making sales of townships, but except to those with whom contracts have been formed, and those who are now actually settled on the property, we are decidedly averse from entering into any negotiations for smaller bodies than townships. From the information we have received from various sources, we are inclined to suspect that some of the large capitalists of Boston are feeling their way towards the purchase of this tract, and in order to accelerate their motions as well as for other purposes we concur with General Cobb in opinion that it will be expedient to have ten or twelve townships surveyed and to give general notice that it is our intention to sell them.

Fifth. To the situation of the Penobscot tract, and of the various concerns which that part of the speculation has created.

It is our design generally to bring to a close all the affairs of Mr. Bingham's estate, and in conformity with what was most probably his intention to diminish as much as possible the objects of superintendence. We should therefore pursue the same policy with regard to the Penobscot that we have mentioned in relation to the Kennebec tract, of closing the system of sale to the actual settler, if we were sure that in so doing we should conform to the stipulations which we understand to have existed between Mr. Bingham and Messrs. Hope and Baring.⁵ As we learn from General

⁵ When Bingham first made his agreement with Baring, it was understood by both parties that an active campaign to sell land to settlers would be jointly undertaken. It was obviously to Cobb's advantage to perpetuate this program, for if it were given up, he would probably lose his job.

Cobb however that this would not be the case, we beg the favour of you at least for the present to pursue the same plan upon which you have hitherto acted, incurring however as little expense as possible and at all events confining your expenditures within your receipts. We shall as soon as possible communicate on this subject with Messrs. Barings, and we think it probable that some new principles will finally be adopted in relation to the whole concern.

We have now we believe touched upon all the points which are of primary importance—and we will trouble you only on one subject further which relates to General Cobb.

We understand that by the terms of his original contract with Mr. Bingham he was entitled to a salary of fifteen hundred dollars per annum, to one thousand dollars towards building a house, and a lot in the town of Gouldsbrough, to two thousand acres of land to be located in such places as might be agreed upon by the parties, and to the residuary profits on twenty thousand acres of the Purchase.⁶ The arrangement we have now made with him is that he shall continue his services at the rate of fifteen hundred dollars per annum, and that you shall fix on a house and lot in Gouldsbrough and the different tracts of the land of which his two thousand acres will be composed, upon which we will execute deeds for one half, and Mr. Richards in behalf of Willing and Cramond for the other half, we paying to Mr. Richards the value of the moiety which he parts with.

We have now only to express the very high respect with which we are animated towards you, while we remain your obedient servants

THOS. M. WILLING

C. W. HARE

Trustees under the Will of Wm. Bingham.⁷

Cobb to Hare, Boston, 28 June 1806 [CP]

My dear Sir:

Boston June 28th 1806

On my return from Philadelphia I remained but two days in this place and then proceeded on my rout for Castine on Penobscot Bay, where I arrived in due time for the Court in the County of Hancock, which I was obliged to attend. Such of the deeds I bro't with me as required it, I had register'd in this county. Others I sent by a safe hand to Kennebeck County, and those which must be register'd in the County of Washing-

⁶ For Bingham's original contract with Cobb, see above, pp. 501-503.

⁷ Except for the signatures, this letter is in the hand of a clerk.

ton I took on with me to Gouldsboro and forwarded them to Machias for that purpose. After remaining a few days with my family at Gouldsboro', I returned to this place the last of May, soon after which I receiv'd your letter of the 27th. of the same month.⁸ General Jackson seems not to remember any thing, if he ever knew, about Walkers bond, but General Knox's [*sic*] says he has all the papers at his house at St. Georges, relating to the settlement between Mr. Bingham and Duer, and thinks he shall be able to ascertain the true state of the bond which he promises to communicate to me. He is rather of opinion with me, that this bond was given for the repayment of the money which Duer had advanced to Madam Laval, and for which Bingham paid Duer, Walker being secured by a deed from La Roche of the one half of the land deeded to him by General Jackson (by Bingham's order, for Madam Laval's use), and which land Walker has sold within three years past. If this is the true state of facts, the bond has nothing to do with the deeds in escrow.⁹

My official situation required my remaining in this place 'till the organization of the government at the late election, during which I found that it would be unnecessary as well as unfriendly to our interest, to present our petition at this session as the business could not be got thro', and the dominant party too warmly opposed to our wishes.¹ Delay at present is certainly our best interest. I therefore requested Mr. Richards to give you a letter on this subject, as I was call'd to Taunton to visit a sick and unfortunate wife, where I remain'd nearly a fortnight; on my return to this town two days since I found your two letters of the 6th and 11th instant.² The difficulty in proving Mr. Bingham's will is the want of a special power from you for that purpose. This you certainly can forward to Mr. Richards or myself, no matter how short or how simple. The statute in this case requires that the executor, or a person interested in a will, or a special power from either, shall apply for the probate of a will. This circumstance did not occur to me when I was in Philadelphia, presuming the general power to Richards and myself would have been sufficient. Some time since I convers'd with General Knox. He then tho't he was entitled to 100,000 dollars at least for his third of the contract. Yesterday I mentioned the subject to him again and your anxiety to have the business closed. He said he had no objection to have it closed upon the most friend-

⁸ This letter, in CP, asks for information on the progress of the petition.

⁹ For the matter of Walker's bond, see above, p. 157.

¹ Though the Federalist candidate for governor, Caleb Strong, had been elected in 1806, the Jeffersonians had won control of the legislature.

² These two letters are in CP and deal with a proposed trip to Boston by Hare.

ly and honorable terms, and if on an equitable calculation it should appear he has receiv'd his fair proportion he shall be satisfied. He says, however, that he has paid 6 or 8,000 dollars which Mr. Bingham is to account for. He promis'd to send me a sketch of his view of the subject that I might inclose to you, but it has not been receiv'd. General Jackson is not satisfied with 5 or 6,000 dollars for his demand. He says that he has always calculated upon a sum so much larger for his time, trouble, expences of every kind in making the contracts for Duer in the first instance and constant attention to them afterwards for years, that he should rather, as he views it at present, let his past services be forgotten, than to receive this pittance; I have requested him to think of the subject, and that it was possible, in the final settlement of Bingham's estate, the profits would not equal that sum. He informed me he should forward his account, that he had delay'd it under an idea that administration would have been had on Mr. Bingham's will in this State.

Before the receipt of your letter of the 6th. instant I had convers'd with Messrs. Thorndike and King, the two persons who propos'd the purchase of the Kennebeck tract, and told them they might now have the opportunity of purchasing that tract on a credit for three quarters of the purchase money, at 50 cents per acre. They answer'd that they never contemplated more than 25 cents and were not inclined to take the whole even at that. This naturally closed the conversation.

When I passed thro' this place, on my return from Philadelphia, I mentioned to Mr. Richards, Mr. Willing's doubts about renewing our powers for the management of the European part of the Penobscot tract, and that he requested copy of our former power might be sent him. Mr. Richards now informs me that he had wrote to Mr. Willing and inclosed a copy of the power, but has receiv'd no answer, and that unless he receives a power from Mr. Willing to manage the part that belongs to the Hopes, he shall think it his duty not to go into Maine this year, as his appearing there without a power of complying with our promise to give deeds this season to a number of persons, most of whom are settlers entitled to their lands by the State contract, will in their minds confirm their past suspicions, which are that we have no title to that country and that it still belongs to the Commonwealth, an idea that has been artfully propagated for two years past among these people, and which has already given us great trouble and will ultimately be attended with mischief. What objection Mr. Willing can have to renewing this power I know not, for I conceive that if it had not been necessary for Mr. Cramond to transfer his right, the former power was compleat in us to manage the European part

of the tract after the death of Mr. Bingham, and since the transfer has been made why not place us in the same situation, when the future importance of the property absolutely demands it? The refusal of Mr. Richards to go with me into Maine embarrasses me exceedingly, as you are sensible, with our powers, I can do nothing without him, not even take possession of the lands for the trustees, a matter of the first importance to their interest. This makes me regret very much that I ever requested you to place Mr. Richards in the power with me, and I know of no mode now by which your views and designs in Maine can be executed, but by forwarding to me, immediately, the sole power to manage that property. Altho' I dislike extremely to be alone in a business of so much accountability, yet as it will be but of short duration, and the business to be done so particularly defin'd by your instructions, I will undertake it, if agreeable to you and Mr. Willing. Mr. Richards wishes this to be done, as he thinks he shall not have it in his power to attend to the business of the Kennebeck tract. I shall go from this place, the last of this week, for Maine thro' the Kennebeck country, where I shall remain a week to make contracts with surveyors for running out the two first ranges into townships of six miles square, and if you can immediately forward by mail your new power it may overtake me at Kennebeck, which will save me the trouble and you the expence of another visit to take possession of the tract and to give deeds to those that are entitled to them. Please to direct for me at Hallowell on the Kennebeck, Maine, to the care of Samuel S. Wilde, Esquire.

[No signature]

*Benjamin Kimball to Cobb, Bridgton, 16 July 1806 [CP]*³

Bridgton July 16 1806

Sir:

I would inform you that last September, I was at Union River, at Mr. Fabrique's a few days after you went from their, and spent about a week a looking of the land and lookd of the land on Timber Brook ridge, which I likd very well. I lookd of a lot that was begun opon by a certain Mr. Allen of Gray,⁴ and was told by Mr. Fabrique that he thought Mr. Allen would like to sell out his labour, and wishd me to buy him out, and that he expected him their soon. I likewise agreed with Mr. Fabrique if Mr.

³ This document is included as another example of the type of problem which a land agent was continually facing. There is a Benjamin Kimball listed in the census of 1790 as living in Bridgton.

⁴ I have not been able to identify Mr. Allen of Gray.

Allen come their before I should see him to buy his labour on the lot he had taken up on Timber Brook ridge, and in the course of three or four weeks Mr. Allen was at my house in Bridgton and told me he had been to Union River and sold the lot above mentioned to Mr. Fabrique, and that Mr. Fabrique told him to inform me that he had procurd the lot for me which I wishd him to, and I gave him an answer the first opportunity. Some time in April last three young men belonging to the neighbourhood where I live called me and wished for my opinion of the Union River country. I told them that I liked very well and should bring [*sic*] too a farm for one of my son and perhaps for myself if I could get a number of good lot together. They likewise told me they should go to Union and if they liked the land should settle their, and one of them, Mr. Samuel Ingalls,⁵ wishd me to give him a minute of the towns and tavern keepers names with the distance from Bridgton to Union River and to have it ready by such a time which I did. Ingalls calld for his directions and asked me if I had any letter wrote to go to Union River. I told him I had not but should by Joseph Kimball⁶ that was a going with him, but gave him a verbial message to Mr. Fabrique which he will tell you. I sent a letter by Kimball to Mr. Fabrique which Ingalls found means to get and keep and by lying and deceit got the Allen lot. Now if you have not given Mr. Ingalls a bond of the Allen lot, I wish you would not, till you can have a fair understanding of the matter and see who desires it, he or I. I was at Union River about three weeks ago, and should have come to Gouldsborough, but heard you was not at home. This from your humble servant

BENJ. KIMBALL

Cobb to Hare, Castine, 25 July 1806 [CP]

To Charles W. Hare, Esquire

Philadelphia

My dear Sir:

I am thus far on my way to Gouldsboro' having passed a fortnight in the Kenebeck country, where I have made an arrangement for the survey of the two first ranges of the Million Acres into townships of six miles square each, with directions to the surveyor to run out to every settler he may find on those townships, whether intitled to it by contract or other-

⁵ There are five Ingallses listed as living in Bridgton in the census of 1790, none of whom is named Samuel. This is undoubtedly the son of one of them.

⁶ There are likewise several Kimballs listed in Bridgton but no Joseph. Again he must have been of the next generation.

Castine July 25th. 1806

wise, one hundred acres; to employ a discreet person to reconoitre the body of the townships, as he runs the outlines, that the best information may be obtain'd of the quality of each; and to return two good plans of his survey, with the names of each settler and the time of his settlement, and his field notes, in which he is to remark the quality of the soil and forrests, the rivers, lakes, mines, lime stone, etc. etc.⁷ This survey will commence by the 20th of next month, and will be compleated in all the months of September and October. The expence of it will probably amount to between 7 and 800 dollars. The surveyor is to run out the townships for 50 dollars each (being seven in number), and he is to have one hundred dollars advanced to him. The expence of the reconoitring and the survey of the settlers lots will be a seperate bill. I have given notice to all the settlers to be prepar'd with their money to pay for their deeds by the 20th. of September next, at which time I intend to be with them for the purpose of making out their deeds. It is not to be expected that those settlers who have to pay one hundred dollars for their land (who are generally very poor) can advance the whole of that sum; of those, I think it best to receive as much as they can pay, and take their obligations on interest for the remainder at short instalments, retaining the deed 'till all the payments are made. Those settlers who have only to pay 5 dollars or 20 dollars each will no doubt be prepar'd to receive their deeds. I presume by this time you may observe our advertisement in the Boston papers for the sale by townships, of the Kennebeck lands, as Mr. Richards agreed with me to have it inserted soon after my departure from Boston.⁸ I have directed the Kennebeck printer to insert the same. When I came from Boston, a Mr. Wait of Portland⁹ was in the stage with me on his return from Philadelphia, who inform'd me that Mr. Broom of your city¹ had enquir'd of him the general character of Bingham's lands in Maine. His answer was that he understood that a large part of them were sandy pine barrens. I ask'd him, with astonishment, how it was possible that he could suffer his thoughtlessness to injure any one with whom he was unconnected and unacquainted, and to betray his ignorance of a country in which he lived, for of all the bad qualities of soil, that fools were so fond of assigning to Maine, that of sandy or pine barren could not be one of

⁷ The field notes of these surveys, transmitted by Daniel Cony in December, 1806, are in CP.

⁸ See, for example, the *Centinel* of 26 July and 6 and 16 August 1806.

⁹ The Waite family was a prominent one in Portland. See W. Willis, *History of Portland*, 850-852.

¹ Presumably James Madison Broom, at this time a member of Congress from Delaware.

them, as little or none of that quality was in the District. He acknowledged his error and ask'd forgiveness, and hop'd that I would undeceive Mr. Broom. I told him that that I could not do, but I consider'd it his duty to do it, which he promis'd to do by letter. I have mentioned this circumstance to enable you to meet Mr. Broom or others, if occasion should require it, on the subject of such kind of information.

I wrote to Mr. Richards from Kennebeck the advice I there receiv'd (which he will probably communicate to you), that Mr. Bingham's will must be proved in one of the counties where his property lies and not at Boston, for he has no property in that county; and that the power of attorney formerly given by Messrs. Bingham, Willing and Cramond to Mr. Richards, and myself for managing the Penobscot tract is still in full force as it respects Mr. Willing, even after the transfer of Mr. Cramond.² If a Boston lawyer could ever give a legal opinion on any subject, it would save us a great deal of trouble and confusion.

I have with me the deeds of the Kennebeck tract which have been recorded, and when I receive those from the county of Washington, the whole shall be carefully forwarded to you.

[No signature]

Richards to Cobb, Boston, 1 August 1806 [CP]

Boston the 1st. August 1806

Dear General:

About a week ago I wrote to Mr. Black for the purpose of securing a cargo for the old schooner by purchase of the plank on his hands, and to say that I hope to send for them in course of a fortnight from that time.

I now sit down to give you a few lines, in the first place to acknowledge the receipt of your two letters from Kennebec. The first is not at hand, but the last by me is of the 17th ultimo.

Since you left this place Mr. Hare has arrived here from Philadelphia and pass'd a week with us. In many instances he appears to have imbib'd correct opinions respecting the property, but in some respects and particularly on subjects of detail I think he wants further insight into or more experience of the nature of wild lands to have a thorough knowledge of the business. You will see in the papers his advertisement offering the Kennebec Million for sale in townships, and I think it more calculated to have effect upon the southern mind, than on the New England opinions, be-

² William Cramond went bankrupt in 1804 and resigned his trusteeship at that time. See below, pp. 1242, 1243.

cause few Yankees will become purchasers of large tracts without such a knowledge of the soil, situation, etc., as might be very desirable to the trustees to acquire. He has long been of opinion and still continues in the resolution of not selling lands by retail. We therefore upon the Kennebec can not *offer by the lot*, beyond the payment to the surveyors which will be $\frac{1}{2}$ in cash and $\frac{1}{2}$ in lots in the survey'd townships, at 1. dollar per acre. With regard to the Penobscot tract, he wishes us nearly to persevere in the plan we have hitherto pursued, with as much attention as possible to œconomy.

It is their particular wish that the lower half of the Kennebec tract may be run out into townships of [torn] miles square before the end of this present year, and I have acquainted Dr. Coney of the same by letter. I think therefore we had better meet at Augusta some time in this month or the surveyors will begin too late upon their business. I do not know exactly when I can leave Boston because Mr. Parish³ whom I expect daily is not yet arrived. I have heard of him at Newport on his way from New York and he must be here very shortly. Soon after his arrival I shall ascertain when I *can leave* Boston and will inform you by the next post. I think we had better endeavour to meet about the 20th at Augusta which will allow due and sufficient time for all our business. He has brought *me individually* a power from T. M. Willing to deed lands on the Penobscot tract, which in addition to the joint power in our hands will I conclude answer all ends.

Very likely the will might with more propriety be proved in Lincoln or Hancock than here, but previous to your letters arrival we had presented the petition to the Probate Court and taken steps to prove it here which I conclude will answer every purpose required.

Mr. H. has settled with General Knox upon the principle of a mutual release. As the debt was larger than either you or I had reason to believe, no doubt on the side of General Knox the bargain is a good one; and under all circumstances I think the trustees have done well to accept it.⁴

With General Jackson there appears no possibility of striking a bargain. He has indulged himself with high ideas of a value which he does not like to relinquish, and as they have now come to a determination to settle with the two other claimants, i.e., Major Jackson and Flint without

³ This may have been the Philadelphia financier David Parish, who was an associate of Hare's. See S. E. Morison, *Otis*, 11. 66-67, 71-74. There is in BP a letter from Parish to Hare, dated Philadelphia [?], 23 May 1812, which deals with William Jackson's suit against the Bingham Trustees.

⁴ See below, p. 1215.



Charles Willing Hare of Philadelphia

Agent of the Bingham Trustees in the Settlement with
the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in 1807

Portrait by Thomas Sully

the General's settlement as a rule to go by, very probably he may hold on for many more years. We have no particular news except that Jerome Bonaparte is supposed to be near the Chesapiek and a British squadron about 150 miles astern of him.⁵ American affairs at the Court of St James do not go smoothly and John Bull shews a great aversion to being bullied.

We have to lament a horrible accident lately happened in the family of Harri Otis. His son Allen incautiously bathing was drownd off one of the new wharfs below the Common about a week since.⁶ Adieu for the present. My kindest remembrances to Black, Mrs. B. and Mrs. Smith,⁷ and believe me

Yours sincerely
J. RICHARDS

Richards to Cobb, Boston, 12 August 1806 [CP]

Dear General: Boston the 12th August 1806

I wrote to you on the first instant stating that I would endeavour to meet you at Kennebec about the 20th August when our exertions might be united for setting off the surveyors on their work by the 1st of next month, as the business ought not to be protracted longer, least the survey of the lower half should not be compleated this year.

You will I hope excuse me for thus disposing of your time without waiting for your consent, but I think if we should delay our Kennebec visit to the time of your proposing, viz., all September, it might make us late.

Since my last Mr. Parish has arrived, and I find that I could easily disengage myself from him by the time of my appointment, but Stephen Jones⁸ being unexpectedly called to Newport will prevent my setting off till Monday the 25th, and if there is no sickness in my family I will set

⁵ Jerome Bonaparte had previously seen a good deal of duty with the French navy in the Caribbean. Though his marriage to Elizabeth Patterson of Baltimore had temporarily displeased his brother, the Emperor, by 1805 he had been allowed to return to France and had been given command of the squadron mentioned above.

⁶ This was Alleyne Otis, then ten years old. See S. E. Morison, *Otis*, I. 238, note 3.

⁷ Mrs. Smith was Cobb's daughter Betsy, who had married Ebenezer Smith. When her husband died, she came to live with Cobb and after the death of Cobb's wife in 1808, Sister Smith, as she was known in the family, became Cobb's housekeeper. See *Historical Researches of Gouldsborough, Maine*, 26.

⁸ This was Stephen Jones, Jr., the son of Stephen Jones of Machias and Richards's brother-in-law. Shortly after this period, he and Richards established a mercantile partnership in Boston.

out as near that time and push on with as much expedition as I can to meet you at Hallowell.

The reason of my writing to Doctor Coney was that Mr. Hare had imbibed such strong prejudice against our eastern surveyors and in favour of Widdington of Dorchester⁹ that I was apprehensive for some time that your arrangements might be materially alter'd. However as Widdington was otherwise engaged they will of course remain, but we are particularly desired to employ such people as have a fair and undoubted character for truth, honesty and capability. To impress Coney strongly with the necessity of this was the principal motive in my writing to him, and by his reply it appears to me that the expence of the business according to his estimate is higher than it ought to be, that particularly as the townships will be of *unequal dimensions* and in many instances the running of *one line* will answer two purposes, I should prefer bargaining by the mile to an agreement per township. I have my doubts if it would not be best to leave the river as a permanent boundary between the 3rd and 4th tier, reckoning from the eastern line, and to have it survey'd upon the ice hereafter, and I have also my doubts whether it would not be best to take $\frac{1}{3}$ of the front line west of the Kennebec for each township even if they should amount to 27 thousand acres each, provided it could be done consistently with the General Courts resolve, or the committee's stipulation. Of the explorer's use to attend the survey and reconnoitre by himself I cannot say that I approve. People are much inclin'd to be *gregarious* in the woods, and I doubt if the additional attestation of a character of the lower class would materially strengthen the description we might collect.

You have doubtless seen in the papers the account of the death of young Austin by Selfridge. I consider the thing in every point of view as very unfortunate and the poor young man as the least to blame of the three. It is generally believed that old Honée knew his son meant to flog Selfridge, that S. had heard he was to be attacked by some one, that he went down to 'Change prepar'd and premeditated to defend himself, and the unfortunate sufferer equally so to attack. The Jacobins are endeavouring and Honée among them to turn the event into a party quarrel.¹

As to politics I have no news to give you more than might be expected

⁹ Not identified. The nearest to Widdington that I have been able to find is Captain Ebenezer Withington, mentioned several times in *History of the Town of Dorchester* (Boston, 1859), written by a committee of the Dorchester Antiquarian and Historical Society. See also *Vital Records of the Town of Dorchester, 1826 to 1849*, 288.

¹ For an account of this affair, see J. Winsor, *Memorial History of Boston*, IV. 587-588.

from sober discreet people and what can not surprise other than State Street politicians, viz., that the British Ministry refuse to be frightened or intimidated at Mr. Jefferson's pop-gun-plots and state that the indecent proceedings of the American Congress in interfering so outrageously, pendente lite, and while the mode of adjustment was in progress, is a sufficient reason at present for breaking off the negotiations. Captain Whitby is reported to have been sent home in the packet, and Miranda is waiting at Trinidad for orders from London how he is to be consider'd and whether to receive assistance or not.²

Remember me kindly to Black and Mrs. Black and Mrs. Smith and believe me

Yours sincerely
J. RICHARDS

Gowen Wilson to Cobb and Richards, Cherryfield,
19 September 1806 [CP]³

Cherryfield 19th September 1806

Gentlemen:

I understand by Mr. Lawrence⁴ that you are going to give deeds upon that plan call'd Tupper's,⁵ which you shew me the other day. I did not think you was. Otherwise I should have informed you more about it. It is most certainly rong, for I fully believe that line running on the north side of Mr. Archer's⁶ lot goes through a good part of my mowing field, as I have be'n informed since I saw you that Mr. Archer has (in a secret manner unknown to me) been running a line through my field which I am shure Mr. Tupper never did with his chain or compass in that course; as

² Miranda had fitted out a filibustering expedition to attack the Spanish in Venezuela and had received tacit support from the British government. See W. S. Robertson, *Life of Miranda*, 1. 293-327. Captain Whitby was commanding officer of the British ship *Leander*, a shot from which had accidentally killed an American aboard a vessel the *Leander* had ordered to stop for visit and search. For this, Whitby was indicted for murder by a New York grand jury. See H. Adams, *History of the United States of America during the Second Administration of Thomas Jefferson*, 1. 199-200.

³ This letter is included as another example of the headaches of a land agent. Gowen Wilson was a selectman of Columbia. See L. Leighton, *Centennial Historical Sketch of the Town of Columbia* (Machias, 1896), 9, 27.

⁴ A John Laurence and a John Laurence, Jr., are both listed in the census of 1790 as living in what was then No. 11, later Cherryfield.

⁵ A William and a Joseph Tupper are listed in the census of 1790 as living in No. 22, the present Jonesboro.

⁶ There is a John Archer listed in the census of 1790 as living in No. 13, now Columbia Falls.

also one of my neighbors tells me that he shall be very much injured if Tuppers plan takes place.

Wherefore your humble and obedient servant
prays that a deed may not be given to Mr. Archer
nor Mr. Jordan,⁷ before it is to me, whom
you will oblige

GOWEN WILSON

N.B. All I wish or desire in this case is that I may hold my improvements which I have kept [word covered by seal] for twenty-five years.

Late in 1806 Charles Willing Hare, acting as agent for the Bingham trustees, journeyed to Boston to attempt to arrange with the Massachusetts legislature a final agreement on the problem of the settling duties. On his arrival in Boston, Hare immediately got in touch with Harrison Gray Otis, one of the leading Federalists in the Massachusetts Senate, and a man who had been close to the Bingham speculation for over ten years.⁸ David Cobb and John Richards were also called on for assistance, though whether they actually participated in the final negotiations is not clear. Hare soon discovered that his best mode of approach was to silence the Democratic opposition to the Bingham interests in the Massachusetts Senate by giving the leading Jeffersonians, especially William King, a share in the speculation. Apparently this solution to the problem originated with King; in any event, as the following letter from Hare to Otis shows, a plan for the settlement of the whole problem was soon agreed upon.

Hare to Otis, Boston, 7 [?] January 1807⁹

My dear Sir,

Boston January 7 [?] 1807

It appearing from your communications to me and from the conversation I have held in your presence with Mr. William King that he has proposed to assume the performance of the settling duties which the late

⁷ There is a John Jordain listed in the census of 1790 as living in what later became Cherryfield.

⁸ For Otis's earlier connection with the speculation, see above, p. 171.

⁹ This letter is in the Otis Papers at the Massachusetts Historical Society.

William Bingham Esquire contracted with this Commonwealth to perform on the land owned by him in the District of Maine and to obtain for his devisees a complete discharge of all obligations arising therefrom together with a delivery of the deeds now in Escrow, I hereby authorise you to conclude a contract with him on the following terms

First. That application shall be forthwith made by me to the legislature of Massachusetts praying for an extension of the time for performing the settling duties, stating that I have contracted with certain persons that they shall fulfil them and requesting the Government to accept those persons as substitutes for Mr. Bingham, and to deliver the deeds now held by the Commonwealth.

Second. If the petition shall be sustained and an act of the legislature passed in consequence of it I will upon the receipt of the said deeds and all other securities given by the said Mr. Bingham, and upon the receipt of Mr. King's bond for 5,000 Dollars payable in two years with interest cause to be conveyed to him or his assigns Townships Nos. 1, 2, and 3 in the southern range of townships on the west side of the River Kennebec in the Bingham purchase with special warranty.

Third. The contract is not be considered as obligatory on my part unless Mr. Bingham's representatives shall be wholly exonerated from all obligation to the State and the deeds and all other securities given by Mr. Bingham together with the bond of Mr. King before mentioned are delivered to me or my agent in Boston within 90 days from the date hereof.

I am dear sir very respectfully

Your most obedient servant

C. W. HARE

H. G. Otis Esquire

Unfortunately, there is no record of just how the necessary support in the Massachusetts legislature was obtained. With William King working on the Democrats and with Harrison Gray Otis, and possibly David Cobb as well, working on the Federalists, the task may not have been too difficult. In ten days the job was done and the following resolve had become law.

Resolve on Charles W. Hare's Petition, 17 January 1807¹

Resolve, on the petition of Charles W. Hare, directing the Committee on

¹ See *Resolves of the General Court of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, 1807, 12-13.*

Eastern Lands to deliver certain deeds of lands sold to William Bingham. January 17, 1807.

On the petition of Charles W. Hare, acting Executor and Devisee in trust of William Bingham,

Resolved, for reasons set forth in said petition, that the Agents for the Sale of Eastern Lands be, and hereby are authorized and directed, to deliver to the said Charles W. Hare, or to the legal representatives of William Bingham, all the deeds of lands sold by the said Commonwealth, to said Bingham, for which payment has been made; and all the obligations of said Bingham, relative to said lands, and that the heirs and estate of said Bingham, be discharged from all demands relative to said lands; *Provided however*, that the said Hare, within six months from the passing of this Resolve, and before the delivery of the deeds and obligations, aforesaid, shall cause to be given to the Commonwealth, one or more sufficient bond or bonds, not exceeding five, in the whole number, and amounting in the whole, to the penalty of eighty thousand dollars; which bonds shall be executed by persons resident within this Commonwealth, with sufficient surety or sureties, to the satisfaction of said agents, with condition that the obligors in each bond shall cause a proportionate number of settlers, amounting to twenty-five hundred, in the whole, to be placed on the tracts of land sold to said Bingham, including all that have already been placed thereon (which last number shall be ascertained, to the satisfaction of said agents) within six years from the first day of June next, or pay to the Commonwealth thirty dollars for each person that shall then be deficient, of the whole number: *Provided also*, that not less than one thousand of said settlers shall be placed on the tract called the Kennebeck tract.

The final arrangements were well summed up in Hare's report to the Bingham trustees the following month. He might indeed take pride in his achievement, all the more so when it is remembered that the Jeffersonian Democrats had for several years been making political capital out of the failure of the large proprietors to carry out the settling duty clauses of their contracts, and that in 1806 they had secured control of both houses of the Massachusetts legislature. In short, Hare's settlement with the Commonwealth was one of the shrewdest pieces of political maneuvering in the whole history of the Bingham speculation.

*Passage to C. W. Hare's Report to Trustees,
Philadelphia, 11 February 1807 [BP]*²

[I can report] that the most important and perplexing of the embarrassments attending Nos. 95 and 96, the Maine Lands, have been removed, General Knox having consented to a mutual release and a resolution having been adopted by the Massachusetts legislature for delivering to us our deeds on condition that good and satisfactory security is given by persons resident within the Commonwealth to perform the settlement duties within six years.

The first of these arrangements was made in July last in Boston, whither I went for the purpose of adjusting the affairs of this concern. The terms were that in consideration of General Knox's releasing all claim to one third of the profits on the purchase, we should release him from all debts due to the estate and assume the payment of his bond to Governor Sargent on which Mr. Bingham had become surety.³ Believing Mr. Knox to be insolvent, and therefore that his right would be our only eventual security, perceiving that his political and private influence was gone and therefore that there was no use in being longer connected with him, and knowing that our accounts were so confused and intricate that in a judicial investigation it would be almost impossible to verify them *as stated by our testator*, I readily proposed and adopted these conditions. That they will be ultimately advantageous I have no doubt. The whole amount with which these lands could be chargeable *as against the General* does not exceed 25 cents an acre and upon payment of that sum, he, or those to whom he might have assigned his interest would, I think, have been entitled to demand a conveyance of one third of the quantity of land which remained to Mr. B. after his sale to Mr. Baring. This quantity approaches 1,600,000 acres, of which upon such principles we should have been obliged to convey upwards of 530,000 acres. Valuing then the land at 50 cents an acre, which is the price at which we are limited by Messrs. Barings, it is certain that we clear by this arrangement more than 130,000 dollars.

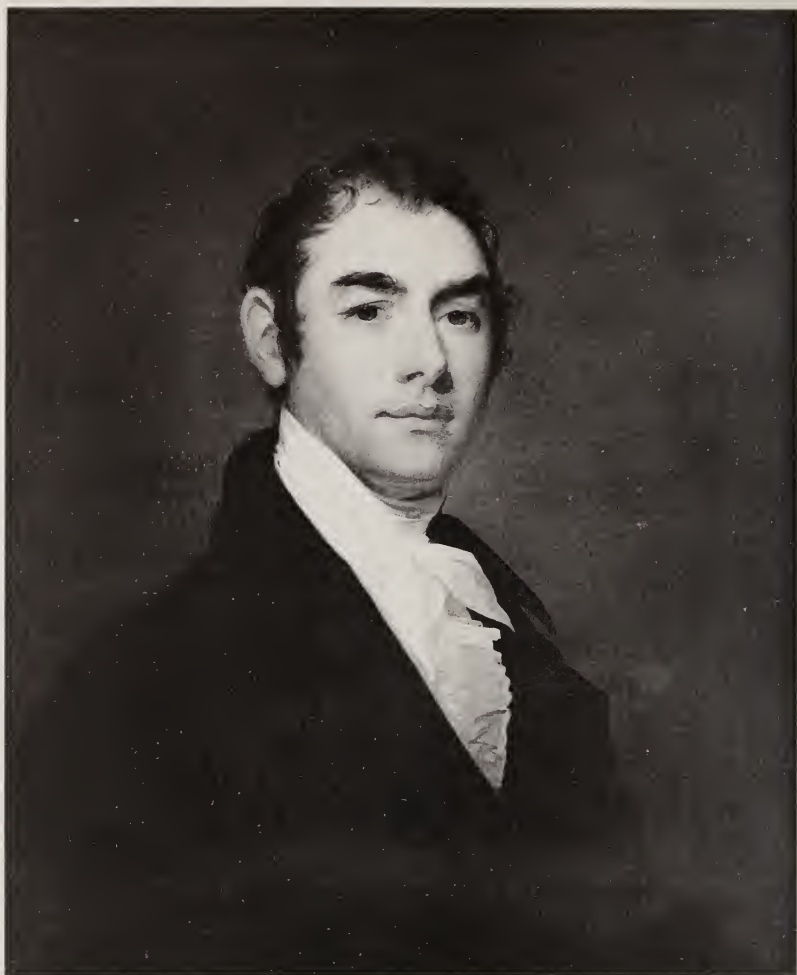
While in Boston I became strongly alarmed with regard to our situation as it respected the rights of the Commonwealth. A disposition was unequivocally manifested on the part of many influential men of all parties to consider the non-performance of the conditions with regard to the set-

² There is in BP a series of annual reports by Hare and others to the trustees. This section, dealing with the Maine property, has been lifted from the very lengthy report for 1807.

³ This was Winthrop Sargent, first governor of the Mississippi Territory.

tlers as a complete avoidance of the contract for the purchase. Some did not hesitate to recommend an absolute forfeiture urging that the legal right to forfeit fully existed, and that against *aliens* it would be fair to enforce it, while others, somewhat less ignorant and profligate, proposed that the amount of the purchase money received by the State should be repaid to Mr. Bingham's representatives, and the land resold for the benefit of the Commonwealth. These opinions had, I found, taken deep root and in the Province of Maine had become a popular topic of Democratic declamation, and abuse—so much so, that not only General Cobb and Mr. Richards, but all of our friends were seriously apprehensive of some violent and outrageous proceeding being adopted towards us. Towards the close of December I therefore again went to Boston, determined to bring the matter to a crisis before the plans of our enemies were matured, and contracted with certain persons⁴ to convey to them three townships of the Kennebec tract upon condition that they should give bonds for the performance of the settlement duties within six years, that they should pay us the sum of 5,000 dollars within two years, that the deeds in escrow should be delivered into our possession, and that we should be exonerated from all claims on the part of the Commonwealth. Having made this arrangement I presented a petition to the legislature praying that the deeds in escrow might be delivered to me upon my giving good and satisfactory security that within six years the settlement duties should be performed or the commutation money paid. A committee being appointed upon my petition I appeared before it and in an address of some length endeavoured to explain the nature and enforce the justice of my request. The committee whose disposition had been questionable reported in my favor, and a resolution has since received the legislative sanction granting the prayer of my petition. The detail of this negotiation it is not necessary to state, but the difficulties attending it were so numerous and powerful that I scarcely anticipated success. Of its fairness with regard to the State, and of its advantages with respect to us, there can be no doubt. We are, in consequence of it, absolved from a clear legal obligation to pay a sum approaching 70,000 dollars. All danger of forfeiture is removed and therefore our title is unsuspected. We have created a common bond of interest with some of the popular leaders in Massachusetts who have promised to support us against all future injustice, and we have placed them in a situation which will compel them to turn the tide of emigration as much in our direction as the course of events will allow. The expense too at which all this has been done is *to us* trifling. The quantity of land to be

⁴ See below, p. 1220.



William King, First Governor of the State of Maine
His Support made possible the Settlement between the Bingham
Trustees and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Portrait by Gilbert Stuart

conveyed will amount to about 65,000 acres, which has not in fact cost the estate more than 25 cents an acre, even tho' to the principal be added compound interest, and which *in that calculation* is not worth more than 16,250 dollars. From which is to be deducted the sum of 5,000 dollars to be paid to us by the contractors, leaving a balance of only 11,250 dollars, not much more than one seventh of the sum which we *were legally liable to pay*. Still however the contract is advantageous to the purchasers, because the land is worth much more to them than to us, and to the Commonwealth, because they will get the settlers which it was the original object of their agreement with our testator to obtain.

These arrangements are the most important that have been effected, but others have also been made, promising I think a great degree of benefit.

The Kennebec tract has been advertised for sale throughout New England. One half of it has at a small expense been surveyed into townships and directions given for surveying the residue. The quality of the land surveyed has been nearly ascertained and its real worth proved to be much greater than has been heretofore imagined. Possession has been formally taken in the names of the trustees. The will has been proved in the proper district, and the deeds *for the first time* duly recorded.⁵ Conveyances have been made to the settlers having rights under the original contract with the State, to take effect on their compliance with the conditions to be performed by them, and suits have been instituted against the lawless intruders. General Cobb has been instructed to proceed with the retail system in Gouldsbrough of which however I do not perceive the advantage, but which I have not thought myself authorised to stop, and Messrs. Otis and Richards have been employed to sell the Kennebec tract altogether or in townships—if in one body at 50 cents, if in townships where the purchaser will have his choice, at one dollar per acre. If the sale is of the whole million they are to receive a commission of three per cent, if in townships, of five per cent, the commission to be divided between them and to be dependent upon the sale. The effect of these measures is already visible. Public attention has been strongly turned towards the property. Applications have been repeatedly made for the purchase of townships. And Messrs. Otis and Richards agree with me in opinion not only that sales may probably be made, but that the concern is assuming a much more prosperous appearance than it has ever yet borne. Mr. Rich-

⁵ The first deed for the Penobscot tract was properly recorded in 1794, but as the original deeds in BP show, all the rest were neglected on this score. Cobb had the other seven which were not in escrow recorded in 1806. As a result of this settlement, the remaining half of the deeds were lifted from escrow and recorded during the summer of 1807.

ards's communication to Messrs. Barings on this head will be so full that I shall not trouble you with further observations at this time. . . .

Harrison Gray Otis was more hesitant than William King when it came to discussing a *quid pro quo* for his services. He took what he called the "precaution" of getting Hare's consent in writing before he, too, acquired a share in the speculation. Since Hare expressed himself as more than willing to have Otis become one of the bondsmen and thus a part owner of the three townships, the latter proceeded to carry out his proposal.

*Otis to Hare, Boston, 20 January 1807*⁶

My dear Sir,

Boston January 20. 1807

The resolve upon your petition has passed both branches of the Legislature, and upon giving bonds executed by persons resident within the Commonwealth to the satisfaction of the Agents for the sales of Eastern lands, your deeds will be delivered, and all the obligations of Mr. B. to the Commonwealth and all their demands against him are thereupon by the words of the resolve *cancelled*. There can be I presume no doubt of the Governor's signature to the resolve, so that the business may be considered as settled. It is now in my power to hold a considerable portion of the three townships; at least one third and probably 5/12, giving bonds in proportion to the quantity retained; and having from the beginning offered either to renounce the whole for the benefit of the Estate, or to admit you to an equal participation of what I may eventually hold, I now repeat the offer, and inform you that if it be now embraced I shall probably be concerned myself in the mode heretofore explained to you. It will give me pleasure to make it a joint concern, and to divide with you any advantage resulting from it; but if from the considerations suggested when here, or from any other, you still decline, you will oblige me by a line expressive of the fact of my having in the first instance appraised you of the possibility of my taking a concern and of my having made you the preceding offers, and of your free and perfect consent and approbation of my being interested. The object of this precaution will be evident and I trust appear to be perfectly correct.

Mr. Richards informs me that General Cobb has given the refusal or preemption [*sic*] of five townships at one dollar until the 15th of March. I

⁶ This letter is in the Otis Papers at the Massachusetts Historical Society.

think this an inexpedient mode of proceeding. It subjects us to an useless restriction and affords an opportunity for combination by destroying the fear of competition. In this very instance I have reason to believe that persons who made me an offer of 75 Cents for the same townships (and who I doubt not would have given a dollar) have united with those who are in treaty with Cobb. In fact I understand that General Cobb was not to be employed in selling, and you will perceive the necessity of new and explicit powers to Mr. Richards and myself to prevent collisions.

I have no doubt that we shall run off a number of townships at one dollar in the course of the spring and summer, and I believe that the arrangement made will appear pregnant with the most unequivocal advantages, by releasing you from a great incumbrance, and bringing forward purchasers and settlers.

You will be pleased to transmit the power of attorney and instructions without delay, and believe me, Dear Sir, with great esteem and respect

Your obedient servant

H G O

Hare to Otis, Philadelphia, 27 January 1807⁷

Philadelphia January 27, 1807

My dear Sir,

As I am preparing to set off for Washington today I must very briefly answer your letter of the 20th and shall confine myself at present merely to that part of the letter which interests yourself.

Previous to the conclusion of the negotiation with Mr. King you certainly informed me that it would be in your power to hold a considerable part of the land to be conveyed to him, that if agreeable to me this portion of the land should be held either for my benefit or for that of Mr. Bingham's Estate, that you had not finally determined whether you would take any beneficial concern in the contract under any circumstances and that at all events you would not do so without my full and entire approbation. To this I replied that so far as regarded myself I thought there would be a strong impropriety in my deriving any emolument from the transaction, that so far as regarded Mr. Bingham's Estate my object was to wind up old concerns and not to enter into new ones, but particularly to get completely out of the power of your government, that with regard to yourself I stood in a relation to you in which no one could stand to me and that I saw no sort of objection to your taking any interest that might

⁷ This letter is in the Otis Papers at the Massachusetts Historical Society.

suit your views. These opinions I now repeat, and declare without hesitation that as one of Mr. Bingham's representatives I would rather you should have an interest in the contract than not.

Upon other subjects I shall on my return to Washington write at length. Excuse the marks of haste which this letter bears and believe me Dear Sir to be

With high respect

Your obedient servant

C. W. HARE

N.B. Do not forget Jackson's grant.

Late in the spring of 1807 the last details of the settlement were carried out. Otis, together with John Richards and his brother-in-law and partner Stephen Jones, Jr., signed a bond for \$32,140 to insure the performance of one-half the settling duties.⁸ That same day Otis purchased Jones's share of the three townships—five sixths of an undivided moiety—and by this transaction presumably acquired entire ownership of the "Federalist moiety" of the lands.⁹ The same day an identical bond was signed by William King and Peleg Talmen of Bath, Benjamin Jones Porter of Topsham, and Moses Carlton, Jr., and Abiel Wood, Jr., of Wiscasset, and the "Democratic moiety" of the three townships passed into their hands.¹ As Otis had bought out his fellow bondsmen, so King at some later date acquired complete control of his half by buying out his partners.²

Neither Otis nor King had a very happy time with his newly acquired property. Though the three townships deeded to them

⁸ A copy of this bond, dated 1 June 1807, is in the Otis Papers at the Massachusetts Historical Society.

⁹ This contract, also dated 1 June 1807, is in the Otis Papers.

¹ A copy of this bond, dated 1 June 1807, is in the Otis Papers. Apparently King, at the last minute, tried to get a \$4,000 deduction because of the contracts already made by Cobb and Richards to sell lands in these three townships. Hare thought this was outrageous, but left the matter up to Otis. I have found no evidence to indicate that any deduction was made. See Hare to Otis, Philadelphia, 8 June and 22 June 1807 in Otis Papers.

The three men who had held the deeds in escrow also wanted a cut. Otis suggested they each be given a piece of plate, but Hare thought that "would perhaps wear too much the aspect of a present" and suggested giving them about \$200 apiece. See Hare to Otis, Philadelphia, 8 June 1807, in Otis Papers.

² See W. Allen, "Bingham Land," 1 *Coll. Me. Hist. Soc.*, VII. 357.

by the trustees—the present Kingfield, Lexington and Concord—were on the southern border of the Kennebec tract and thus should have been the first to attract settlers, the expected movement of population onto the lands failed to take place. By 1809 Otis was writing Hare to see if the trustees would not help him out of what was proving a very bad bargain. He pointed out that in two years he had sold but \$1,500 worth of land—and he thought he would be lucky to get even that sum in ten years. Since his bond would become due in another three years, he suggested selling his share back to the trustees in return for their paying his expenses and assuming the obligation of the bonds. If that was not feasible, he suggested that the grant of another half township might help him out.³ Charles Willing Hare refused to consider either of these proposals;⁴ he had succeeded in getting the Bingham Estate out of a bad hole and he had no desire to get back in again. King's difficulties with his property were of a piece with Otis's. Eventually he bought Otis out—the sale probably took place at the time of separation—and thereby assumed full responsibility for the whole settling duty; but it was not until 1830, and then only after the most generous interpretation of the terms of the settling obligations, that he finally secured his release.⁵

With the passage of the 1807 Resolve, the last serious flaw in the title to the Bingham property in Maine was removed; from now on the trustees could at least feel secure in possession of the lands. Not the least of the advantages derived from the settlement with Massachusetts was the promise of future support for the speculation from these prominent Massachusetts politicians. Otis had been intimately acquainted with the venture since its inception, and his offer to Cobb to purchase lands on the Kenne-

³ See Otis to Hare, Boston [?], 28 July 1809, in Otis Papers. See also an undated letter from Richards to Cobb in CP.

⁴ See Hare to Otis, Philadelphia, 11 October 1809, in Otis Papers.

⁵ For a general account of this transaction, see W. Allen, "Bingham Land," 1 *Coll. Me. Hist. Soc.*, VII, 355-358. This article is so full of inaccuracies that it must be used with caution, but since Allen must have obtained his information on the 1807 settlement from either Otis or King or both, I believe the cited part of the article to be substantially correct.

For Alexander Baring's summary of the settlement, see below, pp. 1240-1242.

bec shows that he was aware of the possibilities for profit from investment in land down east; as one of the stoutest champions of proprietary rights in all New England, he could be counted on to protect the interests of the trustees for many years to come.⁶ The same can be said for William King, on the other side of the house, and the trustees received an extra dividend when their man became the leading spirit in the movement for separation after 1816. If the first governor of the State of Maine had been hostile to the proprietors, untold damage might have been done.⁷

As a by-product of the settlement with the Commonwealth came a new arrangement for the management of the Kennebec tract. Originally the Baring interest had had nothing to do with this part of the Purchase, and it is ironical that by his death Bingham accomplished what he had never succeeded in achieving during his lifetime when, as trustees of the whole estate, the Barings were forced to concern themselves with the Kennebec Million. Since the trustees apparently believed that General Cobb could not handle more than the Penobscot tract, and since Otis and Richards were both now personally interested in the Kennebec region, these two were placed in charge of sales on the Kennebec.⁸ At the same time the trustees abandoned almost completely Bingham's program of selling land at retail; they reasoned correctly that they could never make a profit that way, and that their only hope was to sell in quantities no smaller than townships.⁹ Otis and Richards did succeed, in the year 1807, in

⁶ There is a good deal of material on Otis's attempts to develop his Kennebec property in the Otis Papers.

⁷ There is a very interesting series of letters from Richards to John Hare Powel in BP written in 1819 and 1820, at the time of the separation movement, which indicate that Richards successfully influenced King and the first Maine legislature to keep the valuation of wild lands low. See, for example, his letter dated Boston, 28 March 1820, in which he speaks of the coming assembly of the "Wise Men of the East" and adds that he has "got at the names of all whose noisy mouths should be silenced—the only question will be whether the price of molasses to sweeten the sop may not be too high." See also his letter dated Boston, 15 December 1819, in which he reports a conversation with the "great man of Maine" and a program designed to limit the value placed on wild lands.

⁸ See the draft of a power of attorney to Otis and Richards to sell lands on the Kennebec dated March, 1807. This draft is in BP. There is another copy, somewhat different in form, in Otis Papers.

⁹ See Hare's report to the trustees, above, p. 1217.

making a contract for the sale of one township on the Kennebec, but the agreement was finally abandoned.¹ In 1810 a more successful bargain was made with the Boston merchant Joseph Tilden, who purchased, and what is more, apparently paid for, Township No. 33 and a part of Mariaville in the Penobscot tract.² This one successful sale was, however, an exception to the general rule; it was not until the 1820's that the land began to sell.

With the problem of the settling duties removed and a new program for the sale of land initiated, Charles Hare turned to the task of reaching agreements with those who had claims against the estate. General Knox's claim to the residuary profits on one third of the land had already been extinguished, and Knox was dead.³ In 1807 Otis managed to reach an agreement with Henry Jackson, whereby the General relinquished his claim to the residuary profits on one hundred thousand acres, as well as his other claims on the estate, in return for an annuity.⁴ In

¹ The full records of this sale are in BP. The township in question was No. 3, first range, on the east side of the river, and was sold to James Bridge, Reuel Williams, Daniel and Samuel Cony at one dollar per acre. The purchasers were given ten years to pay. See the account of this sale, dated Boston, 27 August 1807, in BP. Otis and Richards, who effected the sale, got a five per cent commission. There are also the four mortgages which the purchasers gave to Hare and Thomas Mayne Willing, dated 19 August 1807, and copies of the original deed dated 20 June 1807, in BP. When the ten years were up and the purchasers had been unable to pay, they reconveyed the township to the trustees in return for their mortgages. See Deed of Release, dated 19 July 1817, in BP. The township in question is the present Wellington.

² A copy of the deed to Tilden, dated 24 February 1810, conveying No. 33 and part of No. 20 at one dollar per acre is in BP.

³ See above, p. 1215.

⁴ Henry Jackson's release, dated 1 September 1807, and witnessed by Harrison Gray and Eliza G. Otis, is in BP. Jackson was probably the more willing to come to an agreement with the trustees because he had finally been able to close out his long and disagreeable connection with the "back tract" contract. For this contract see above, pp. 59-61 and 559-561. In 1801 the Massachusetts Attorney General had been ordered to bring suit against Jackson for not having carried out the terms of this contract. In addition, Jackson had been obliged to pay his note to Tudor and had not been reimbursed by Bingham. See above, pp. 1120 and 1061. Finally, in a Resolve of 9 March 1804, the General Court ordered the Attorney General to drop the suit, and agreed to pay Jackson \$2,800 plus interest since 1793 if he would cancel the contract. The fact that William Tudor was chairman of the joint committee which made this recommendation to the legislature suggests that he, having been paid what was due him by Jackson, was now willing to use his influence to help Jackson get out of this entanglement.

1810 the trustees paid off the assignees of Royal Flint, who had a claim similar to that of Henry Jackson, to the tune of twelve thousand dollars.⁵ And finally, in 1812, after much litigation, a settlement was reached with Major William Jackson.⁶ Thus, by the time the War of 1812 began, the Maine property was free and clear of almost all its past encumbrances. There remained only the holdings of the "fortunate adventurers" in the Land Lottery of 1786—holdings which were scattered throughout the Penobscot tract. Though Bingham had considered trying to buy these up, apparently no concerted effort to do so was ever made, and the title to a fairly sizable amount of land in eastern Maine today derives from this source.⁷

The new policy of the trustees to put Otis and Richards in charge of the Kennebec tract and to sell land only by townships left General David Cobb high and dry. Though he was allowed to continue his program of developing settlements on the Penobscot tract, the trustees made it very clear that they were anything but sanguine about the success of this system and they insisted that whatever money Cobb might need for his developments be obtained from the land itself.⁸ The trustees must have allowed the General to stay on as agent and continue to draw down his salary because they believed his political influence in the Massachusetts government was a valuable asset to the concern, and perhaps, to a lesser extent, because they felt obligated to maintain him after his years of faithful service to the Bingham speculation. As a result, from 1807 until his retirement in 1820, the General simply went through the motions of being agent: he helped take care of

⁵ This settlement between the trustees and the assignees of Royal Flint, dated 10 March 1810, is in BP. Flint had made his claim over to Melancton Smith of New York on 11 April 1792. Smith's heirs, his son, and John Bleecker, received \$12,000 in return for a full release.

⁶ For the settlement with Major Jackson, see above, pp. 376–384. In a letter to Cobb dated Philadelphia, 6 September 1809, Hare asked Cobb to review the story of his agency for use in connection with Major Jackson's suit against the trustees. This letter is in CP.

⁷ In the sale to Tilden, for example, three lottery prizes were reserved. For the information that lottery tickets form the basis of titles in eastern Maine today, I am indebted to the Registrar of Deeds for Washington County.

⁸ See Hare's report to the Trustees, above, p. 1217.

some of the details in connection with the sale to Tilden;⁹ he saw to it that federal and state taxes were paid when they became due;¹ in 1818 he succeeded in getting the Massachusetts legislature to reduce the taxes on the Penobscot tract by some two hundred and fifty dollars;² he prepared a plan for the division of the Penobscot tract between the Baring and the Bingham interests;³ but for the most part his position was little more than that of a clerk, and one suspects that, in actuality, most of the work was done by his son-in-law, John Black. The General continued his attempt to develop his farm at Gouldsborough, still hoping to demonstrate to his skeptical neighbors that agriculture could really pay down east, but in this program also he made little progress.⁴

Since there was apparently no future for him as a land agent, General Cobb determined to devote his remaining years to public service, and for most of the rest of his active life, he held positions of importance in the Massachusetts government. After having been President of the Senate for four years, he failed of re-election in 1805, and when he ran for Councillor the following year he was again defeated. Federalist fortunes improved in 1808, however, and Cobb was elected to the Council and in 1809 was chosen Lieutenant-Governor. In the campaign of 1810, when he was running for re-election to this position, the Republicans really opened up on him. They got hold of a letter written by the Reverend Daniel Merrill which described a conversation which Cobb had had with several clergymen and lawyers at Castine in 1808. In the course of this conversation Cobb was reported to have said, "The Christian religion in America will come to nothing," basing his argument, apparently, on the lack of relig-

⁹ See below, p. 1230.

¹ Most of the correspondence between Cobb and Hare and Cobb and Samuel Milligan, who handled Hare's affairs in Philadelphia during his absence, for the years 1815 and 1816 deals with tax problems. These letters are in CP.

² A copy of Cobb's petition to the legislature is in a letter from him to Hare dated Boston, 19 January 1818, in CP. The legislature's action is in a Resolve of 17 February 1818.

³ See the map facing page 862 for the proposed division. Apparently this division was never put into effect. See also Appendix H.

⁴ See below, p. 1231.

ious uniformity in this country. When the clergymen present protested, Cobb was alleged to have added that the civil authority could, if it so desired, force men to worship all one way and burn those who refused. Though this last statement was obviously nothing more than a typical example of Cobb's fondness for hyperbole, the *Eastern Argus*, the leading Republican paper in Maine, made the most of it.⁵ At the same time Cobb was attacked for interfering with the normal processes of the courts. In 1808 an indictment had been brought against the town of Gouldsborough for not having a schoolmaster as the law required. Cobb had appeared in court and after explaining that there was a dame school in Gouldsborough and that the town was very short of funds, succeeded in having the indictment nol prossed.⁶ Finally, Cobb was accused of being a British agent. The Republicans pointed out that he was in the pay of the Barings and suggested that he would naturally be more attached to his own salary than to the public interest whenever questions affecting his employers came up in the Massachusetts legislature.⁷ Just how much these attacks hurt the General and the Federalist ticket is hard to say; at any rate the Republicans won the election of 1810 and Cobb was once again out of office. When the Federalists returned to power in 1812, Cobb regained his former position as Councillor and managed to hold the office for the next six years, despite the fact that during most of this period the District of Maine as a whole remained solidly Republican. With the outbreak of the War of 1812, Cobb was appointed to the Massachusetts board of military defence and served also as Major-General of the Tenth Massachusetts Militia until relieved by John Brewer, but there is nothing among his papers to indicate that his part in the conflict was in any way an important one.⁸ With the coming of peace the General returned to his farm

⁵ See the *Eastern Argus* for 8 and 22 March and 5 April 1810. For these and other newspaper references below in this chapter, I am indebted to my friend Robert E. Moody.

⁶ See *Eastern Argus* for 15 March 1810.

⁷ See *Eastern Argus* for 22 March 1810.

⁸ There are few items in CP for the years 1812-1814. Most of them consist of appeals from various towns for more defense and requests for additional JP's.

at Gouldsbrough and his position as Councillor. Now close to seventy, the old man was content to live from day to day and to leave to others the problems and responsibilities of politics and land speculation.

As the nineteenth century wore on, David Cobb's little circle of family and friends at Gouldsbrough began to scatter, until by the time he left Maine, he was living almost alone. In 1808 his wife had died, after years of semi-invalidism, and from that time until his death, his widowed daughter, Betsy Smith, kept house for him.⁹ Shortly after the 1807 settlement, John Richards moved permanently to Boston, where his business concerns drew him further and further apart from the old General.¹ His son-in-law, Samuel Wilde, continued to keep in touch, though he, too, was soon to move to Massachusetts.² Cobb's son Henry was at sea³ and the other children were moving away. Sometime after 1808, John Black, realizing that Ellsworth, and not Gouldsbrough, was destined to be the leading town of that region, moved there with his family.⁴ The eldest son, Thomas, must have remained longer with his father, but after the War of 1812, he and his family moved to Bangor.⁵ As long as Henry Jackson lived, he remained a faithful friend, but when he died in 1812,

⁹ See J. W. Porter, "General David Cobb of Gouldsbrough, Maine," 2 *Coll. Me. Hist. Soc.*, VI. 4-5.

¹ Richards remained a faithful correspondent, however, and also became the merchant in Boston with whom Cobb did a good part of his business during these last years. See the letters and accounts of Richards and Cobb in CP from 1807 to 1820.

² Wilde, as a good Federalist, viewed the progress of the Republicans in Maine and Massachusetts with alarm. See, for example, Wilde to Cobb, Hallowell, 26 April 1810, in CP. When Maine separated from Massachusetts, Wilde moved to Newburyport, presumably to keep his judgeship in the Massachusetts judicial system.

³ See H. Cobb to Cobb, New York, 13 July, 1811, in CP, where Henry speaks of leaving on a ship for Chile. See also H. C. Swan to Cobb, New York, 23 December 1810, in CP, which gives a good report of Henry as mate aboard ship.

⁴ Black must have moved to Ellsworth sometime between 1809 and 1811. His fourth child, Elizabeth, was born in Gouldsbrough in August, 1809; his fifth child, William, was born in Ellsworth in October, 1811. See A. H. Davis, *History of Ellsworth, Maine*, 33-34, which also says that Black succeeded Donald Ross, who resigned in 1810, *ibid.*, 32. Since evidence in CP indicates that Ross died either in 1804 or early 1805, this statement must be in error. See G. Hurbert to Cobb, Surry, 26 January 1805, in CP, in which Hurbert asks Cobb for help in settling Mr. Ross's estate.

⁵ The earliest letter in CP from Bangor is Thomas Cobb to Cobb, 19 October 1818.

the last of the General's Revolutionary comrades was gone.⁶ After the war, Otis and the trustees began again to turn their attention to the Kennebec tract, but the chances are that Cobb knew little or cared little about this new campaign.⁷ Thus the old man approached retirement; and it must have been hard for him, in his last years, to watch his former associates, John Richards and John Black, begin to succeed where he had failed.

*Cobb to Hare, Gouldsborough, 16 April 1808 [BP]*⁸

Charles W. Hare, Esquire

Gouldsborough April 16th. 1808

Philadelphia

My dear Sir:

Inclosed you will receive our annual accounts for the years 1806 and 1807, with my private account. The annual account for 1806 ought to have been forwarded to you the last year, but I had unfortunately misplaced it at the time, and afterwards forgot it. The store, you will observe, is the only department we have, out of many that we formerly had in operation, and that has been kept up, in a very small way, for the collection of its debts, and for little supplies to our settlements and mills. This however will now no longer be continued. The stock on hand is the rubbish of the store and the debts due it. Most of these, if not all, will be gradually collected. The sale of lands is small, and I think will continue so for some time to come, or untill the lands on the western side of the Penobscot River are generally settled. They are settling fast for this country. In this delay of sales, however, we have one consolation—that the value of land, in the general opinion, is greatly enhanced. It is easier now to obtain two dollars per acre, than it was half a dollar when we first came here. Our new settlement in Nos. 20 and 26, Middle Division⁹ (about fifteen miles east of Penobscot River) is flourishing, and from the demands for lands in that neighbourhood, we contemplate this year a sur-

⁶ Jackson tried very hard to get Cobb to spend the winter with him after the death of Cobb's wife. See Jackson to Cobb, Boston, 24 December 1807 and 8 January 1808, in CP.

⁷ There is a good deal of material in BP on Otis's attempt to develop the Kennebec tract. See especially H. G. Otis, Jr., to Hare, Boston, 12 October 1817, a long report on the condition of the property. Otis also sent Hare a detailed list of the settlers on the Kennebec tract and their holdings.

⁸ There is an almost identical copy of this letter in CP.

⁹ The present Mariaville and Amherst.

vey of a part of two townships more. A new settlement will likewise be commenced in No. 15, Middle Division.¹ A part of this township must likewise be survey'd into lots. These settlements will be of no further expence to concern, than the surveyor's bills. Our mills would have been more productive this year than ever they have been, if the usual commercial intercourse had continued, but at present all is stagnant. The inhabitants here have always depended on the western parts of the State for at least three quarters of all their necessities of life, and they were purchased by their lumber and fish. Now not one family in ten, on the sea shore, have had either bread or meat for two months. They have subsisted on clams and small fish and potatoes, in hope that a little time would afford them their usual supply of bread. Let the madness of Congress proceed one step further, and interdict the coasting trade, and this country must of necessity be in a state of rebellion.

I have to request your kind attention in remitting the ballance of my private account, or a part of it, as you may find convenient, to our friends Richards and Jones at Boston, who will receive it for my use.

I hope in future to be more frequent in my correspondence with you than I have been for the year past. The past winter has been peculiarly distressing to me. A severe lumbago has confined me to my house for nearly three months. I am now however returning to my usual health, and hope the warm weather will thoroughly thaw me out.

I am, dear sir, with esteem

Your obedient servant

DAVID COBB

*Elisha Cousins to Cobb, Eden, 24 September 1809 [CP]*²

Honoured Sir:

Eden September 24 1809

Thare is an acident happened which semeth strange to us and we find no dirictions in the law in such a case and we beg your advice. The matter is our constable by accident broak the peace by striking a man and wheather his paying a fine mends his oath or not is what we do not know and we pray that you would in forme us how we must proceed in the matter.

¹ The present Eastbrook.

² This document is included as an example of the difficulties encountered in connection with the establishment of an effective judicial system in a new country. Elisha Cousins was one of the leading men on Mount Desert. See George A. Street, *Mount Desert*, 154, and note 1 on the same page.

As for the November meeting we need some dirictions for thare is none
of us knows the bounds of the district neither men sutable for the porpose
in them. Sor we subscribe our selves your honours most obedent

Elisha Cousins }
Select Men

Cobb to Hare, Gouldsborough, 29 October 1809 [CP]

C. W. Hare, Esquire
Philadelphia
Dear Sir:

Gouldsboro' October 29th. 1809

Your two letters have been duly receiv'd, that of the 12th instant by the last mail. The other of 6th. September was at this place when I arrived here from Boston,³ at which time Mr. Black was at our two settlements, the one at Mariaville in Nos. 20, 21, 26, and 27, Middle Division, the other at No. 38, Middle Division, and No. 1, Northern Division,⁴ attending our surveyors who have been employ'd the past season in running out townships into lots for settlements. He returned here about a fortnight since and soon after embark'd for Boston for the purpose of bringing down the necessary supplies for our families and dependents for the ensuing winter. I expect his return in the course of this week, and as soon after as he can possibly attend it, he will make out the statement of expenditures and receipts of our agency in this country, agreeably to your request. This measure must be tedious, and will take some time to complete.

Mr. Tilden's bonds and mortgages must come into this county for record before they can be forwarded to you. You will receive them in due time; but I understand, since I left Boston, that Mr. Tilden is dissatisfy'd about the purchase, and I presume delay has taken place in consequence of it, otherwise the mortgages would have been here for record before this.⁵

Mr. Richards and myself have long contemplated the cutting of a road

³ Both these letters are in CP. They both request Cobb to give a history of his agency for use in connection with Major Jackson's suit against the trustees.

⁴ The present Greenfield and Summit.

⁵ There is in BP a copy of a deed to Tilden dated 1 June 1809 conveying Township No. 32 and part of Township No. 33. Tilden was apparently dissatisfied with this purchase for the next year a new deed was made out conveying all of Township No. 33 and part of Township No. 20. See above, p. 1223, note 2. Joseph Tilden is listed as a merchant in the Boston Directory for 1809.

thro' the middle of this tract, from the Penobscot to the Schoodic, or St Croix River, distance say 70 miles, as a measure that would contribute more than any other to elivate the country. (If such a road had been compleated prior to the banefull period of the embargo, it would have been, and would now be, the great thoro'fare for the cattle trade between the States and the Province of New Brunswick), but the want of funds has heretofore prevented the enterprize. But in reviewing the state of our proceedings here, the last winter and spring, we estimated that from the amount of our boards, mill rents, log rents, the old store debts and some small sums that might be receiv'd from the lands, our funds would be sufficient to reconoitre the rout of the remainder of the above mentioned road (as 20 miles of it is now passible), to compleat the survey's, which were much wanted, to run out Tilden purchase and to rebuild a saw mill belonging to the concern in this town, which will cost 1,200\$, all of which are now compleated, excepting the saw mill which will be finish'd by 1st. December. But we shall be very much embarras'd about our funds, as the cursed measures of the government have annihilated our board trade, from which we estimated to have receiv'd nearly 2,000\$.

Our Mariaville settlements are very pleasing and fast increasing. Fifty families are now on those four townships, but they have been this year unfortunate in having their wheat blasted. The settlement at No. 38 and No. 1 consists of fifteen families and will increase. No money has ever been receiv'd from these settlements, only by way of the saw mill we erected at Mariaville.

The vast variety of my avocations, since my return here, must be my apology for not giving you a letter sooner. No man who has not resided in a new and wild country like this can have any conception of the variety of constant attentions that press upon the mind, and partly now occasioned by my own concerns here. Within two years past I have undertaken to bring forward two new farms, by the labour of western husbandmen, for the sole purpose of teaching the Yahoos here, these log stealing scoundrels, how to get their living by cultivating the soil, and I have the pleasure, this early, to say altho' it costs me 600\$ a year it has had its effect.

I shall leave this place in the course of a fortnight or three weeks for Boston, and shall arrive there probably by the first week in December, where I shall remain for the winter; and I promise you from thence a communication now and then.

I am, dear sir, with esteem

Your obedient servant

D. C.

*Cobb to Hare, Gouldsborough, 22 August 1810 [BP]*⁶

Gouldsborough August 22d. 1810

Charles W. Hare, Esquire

Philadelphia

Dear Sir:

I have delay'd giving you a letter since my return to this place from Boston untill I had visited our settlements, seen the general state of our concerns here, and made such arrangements for the operations of the season as were contemplated. These measures are now compleated.

Our great and most important settlement is Mariaville, which occupies parts of five different townships, viz., Nos. 20, 21, 26, 27, and 14, Middle Division, is in a flourishing situation, and contains about seventy families. The next settlement of importance is the Sunkhase, which is on a small river of that name, a branch of the Penobscot, and is in No. 38, Middle Division, and in No. 1, North Division, and consists of from 15 to 20 families doing well. Other settlements are progressing farther east in Nos. 17 and 23, Middle Division, in Nos. 16 and 17, East Division, and in Nos. 6 and 7 on the Schoodic or St. Croix River.⁷ All these settlements, except the last, are in the midst of the forrests and unconnected with any of the old settlements of the country, and were selected, except the Sunkhase settlement, to facilitate our intended road thro' the middle of this tract from the Penobscot to the Schoodic, a part of which, as I have heretofore inform'd you, is passable from the Penobscot almost as far as No. 23, Middle Division.⁸ From thence to the Schoodic, we have contracted to have open'd the present season, and I presume the contractors are now at work. Surveyors are likewise at work in running additional settlers lots in Nos. 21, 22, 27 and 28, Middle Division.⁹ Our intentions are, that as we progress in making our contemplated road, to run out lots for settlers along the same on lands best fitted for the purpose, and on such moderate terms as to induce purchasers to occupy and improve the same. By these means we anticipate at no very distant period, a road thro' a wilderness of seventy miles in length compleated, and along its borders settled with a sett of hardy farmers uncontaminated by the disorganizing and demoralizing effects of the lumber stealing business that has ever dis-

⁶ There is an almost identical copy of this letter in CP.

⁷ The Sunkhase enters the Penobscot just above Old Town. The three last-mentioned settlements were in Deblois and Beddington, in Alexander and Princeton, and in Baring and Baileyville.

⁸ That is, as far as the present Beddington.

⁹ Osborn Plantation and Aurora. Townships Nos. 22 and 28 are still unincorporated.

graced the sea shores and rivers of Maine. The completion of this measure will have the happiest effects on the public mind. It brings the eastern boundary of the Commonwealth almost one hundred miles nearer the Capital; it will make the proprietors respectable and popular, and smother for ever the confiscating avarice of Democracy; at the same time it must elivate the value of this property beyond any present calculation.

When we parted at Boston you kindly advanced to me three hundred dollars in cash and your acceptance for twenty one hundred more, making in the whole twenty four hundred dollars, fifteen hundred of which I receiv'd as in full of my stipend for the last year ending the first of May last. Four hundred dollars was to repay Messrs. Richards and Jones for what they advanced for us in our expenditures here the last year, and the other five hundred dollars you permitted me to receive as in part of my stipend for the ensuing year.

On viewing the probable amount of our funds here, I am rather inclined to think we shall receive in the course of the year a sufficiency for our contemplated expenditures, but we have not the present means of making such advances to our road makers and surveyors as are required. I shall therefore take the liberty of drawing upon you, in the course of a fortnight, in favour of Mr. Jones of Boston, for one thousand dollars, which I hope you will honor. If it makes any difference with you in the keeping of your accounts, you may charge this draft as advanced to me in full of my stipend for the present year. If I should be mistaken as to the amount we may receive here this year, I will give you timely notice, if further supplies are required.

In my next I will communicate to you a plan that we have long contemplated for the purpose of increasing the purchases as well as enhancing the price of our lands in this tract.

Mr. Richards sail'd from Machias for England on the 2d. instant with his wife and family, in a ship of his own, purchas'd for the purpose and loaded with pine timber etc. for the Liverpool market.

I intend visiting the Kennebeck in the course of the next month if possible, where I shall make enquiries as to the state of the property there. If my information is true, depredations are making on the Dead River by the infernal log stealers, and a number of people are removing to occupy the valuable extent of interval land on that river, where they may reside and carry into more compleat effect the depridations of the country.

I am, dear sir, with due esteem

Your friend and obedient servant

DAVID COBB

Hare to Cobb, Philadelphia, 25 September 1810 [CP]

Philadelphia September 25th. 1810

My dear Sir:

Yours of the 22d of August arrived in Philadelphia during my absence on a journey into the back parts of Pennsylvania and New York, from which I have lately returned. The description you give of the settlements on the Penobscot tract is very satisfactory, and I will advance the money (1,000 dollars you speak of) as on account of salary whenever it may be drawn for. I mentioned when I was in Boston that I would agree to make the necessary advances for completing the road to the Schoodiac and therefore you may also draw for whatever sums are necessary to effect that purpose, but as to all other objects we understand that the funds due from the settlers must repay expences. It would give us new spirit, if we could perceive that within any reasonable time this property would cease to be burthensome. I have lately adopted the idea that the Merino sheep might be introduced upon those parts of the Maine Lands which have the greatest number of settlers, to great advantage, to be fed in flocks under the care of shepherds in the woods in summer, and to be distributed among the settlers to be maintained by them in winter. Will you be so good as to state how far you think this notion is a good one? From all I have observed and learned, the climate of Maine is not unfavourable to this or any other species of sheep. In the woods no doubt abundant provisions may be obtained for them in mild weather. The wool it is proved does not deteriorate in this country, and the very high price of fine wool in England, the increasing demand for it here, and the interruption which the Spanish revolution will probably for ever give to the exportation of it from that country, where I have no doubt the whole sheep system will be abandoned, will I think render the raising of fine woolled sheep very profitable. How far would their introduction on a large scale into Maine encrease the facility of settlement? How many of the settlers might be interested with them? Does the country raise a sufficient surplus quantity of hay fodder etc. for their support during the winter? Are there any common sheep now raised there and are they found profitable? Would it be agreeable to you to give a general superintendence to such as might be sent there? I have suddenly taken up the idea, and have not yet digested any plan. It may be very wild, but I should be glad to hear your opinions in regard to it. If the importation of 200 Merino's would greatly facilitate the settlement by establishing the fact that our lands in Maine may easily be converted into a fine grazing country, and if land otherwise wholly unpro-

ductive can in this way be turned to advantage, the project may be worthy of consideration.

Major Jackson some time since took up the extraordinary notion, and obstinately persists in it, that Mr. Bingham's estate has already realized great profits from the Maine speculation, and has instituted a suit against the trustees in which for his right to the profits on 100,000 acres he pretends to claim seventy thousand dollars. In order to be furnished with the necessary evidence on the trial I now enclose you a commission for your examination, and that of Mr. Black so far as relates to the accounts. The interrogatives and the papers annexed to the commission will sufficiently explain the object in view. I also herewith enclose instructions as to the manner of executing the commission. You will greatly oblige me by calling the commissioners together and having the return made as soon as possible.

Any plan you may communicate for encreasing the sales and value of the Penobscot tract will receive great and early attention. With respect to the Kennebeck I have fully conveyed my ideas to Mr. Otis, whom I wish you to consult before you adopt any measures there.

I am, dear sir,

very respectfully

Your friend and servant

C. W. HARE¹

General David Cobb

Cobb to Hare, Gouldsborough, 10 November 1810 [CP]

Gouldsborough November 10th. 1810

Charles W. Hare, Esquire

Philadelphia

My dear Sir:

Mr. Black has just returned from Boston, where he has been detain'd three weeks by contrary winds. In the ensuing week is our County Court at Castine which I shall attend, and hope in the course of it to compleat the papers for your District Court, which shall be forwarded immediately after.

On the subject of sheep, I will observe generally, that they have always been in this country from its first settlement, that the climate of Maine has ever been consider'd the most favourable of any in the Union, for the growth of that animal. They have always been here from the first settlement of it, they are larger, the meat higher flavour'd than any in

¹ All but the signature of this letter is in the hand of a clerk.

New England, and I presume the fleeces equally good; but they are preserved with difficulty from destruction by wild animals with which our forrests are fill'd, such as bears, wolves, lynx's (call'd by the French Lucifers), wild cats etc. specially on and near the new settlements. All farmers in this country have little flocks of sheep. Our settlers at Mariaville have their little flocks that are kept in their clear'd fields around their houses. The inhabitants of this and all the neighbouring towns keep their flocks of sheep—I have now twenty five, but we loose more or less every year. I have lost three this year. In this town only, not less than fifty sheep have been distroy'd this year, mostly by bears, and probably now and then a hungry rascal may take one. Mr. Jones an inhabitant of this town has a flock of forty or more mix'd with the Merino blood, which has vastly improved his fleeces. The last year he had four quarter blooded Merino rams, three of which were in one night kill'd by a bear, in a yard within ten rods of his house. The business of keeping sheep has been the universal practice of the farmers of New England ever since its first settlement. They have always, and they do now, keep as many sheep as they are able to winter; from this source they have always supplied themselves with three quarters, if not seven eighths, of the woollen's their families have ever consum'd; and untill you have a total change of public opinion, and perhaps of government too, you never can essentially increase the numbers of sheep in New England. You may better their fleeces, which will be very valuable, and *so long as it is a crime for any one to improve more than 1 or 2 hundred acres of land, so long will it be that none but a farmers family can be cloathed in woollen, and they but partially.*² I have enumerated these circumstances to show the difficulties attending sheep keeping in this country, that you may form an opinion how far your plan for breeding Merino's is practicable. If it was practicable, I am clearly of opinion that the expences would far exceed any probable returns. If shepards could be had that would keep the flocks in the summer, the winter fodder could not be obtain'd in this country. The present stock of the country is now beyond its fodder. The numerous islands that border the shores of this are the proper places for sheep, where they subsist without fodder round the year, and might now be used, with small expence, for this purpose, if the fishermen and others could be restrain'd from distroying them. But this cannot be done. There is an island in Frenchman's Bay, within half a mile of the shore of this town, that if I can purchase it of the government, I should be pleas'd in a concern with you in Merino sheep on this island. It contains 800 acres.

² This is a reference to the attacks made by the Republicans on large landholders.

The plan that Mr. Richards and myself have contemplated for enhancing the price of our lands here, I intended to have communicated to you at Boston, but thro' the hurry we were both in, it escaped my memory. It is this—in future to sell land to settlers and receive our pay in pine logs deliver'd at tide water, which logs are there saw'd or hew'd for the European market and to be convey'd in our own ship. We are persuaded that our lands will sell for 50 or 100 per cent. more to be paid in logs, which we shall git, than for money, which we shall never obtain. Say land that sells from 1 to 2 dollars per acre for cash. The settler will not be unwilling to give 3 or 4 dollars per acre if he can pay in logs. The business of freightage is so well ascertain'd that it can pay insurance round [?] with a small profit. The only expense therefore attending this business is the purchase of the ship in the first instance, which the concern must be at the expence of. The business of loading and all negotiations here will be transacted by Mr. Black who is to have a small premium on the proceeds. Mr. Richards has long been persuaded that this measure would elivate the value of this country beyond any other plan, and the last spring he communicated to his European correspondents the system; and I understand by Mr. Black, that Mr. Jones has lately receiv'd a letter from Mr. Baring in which he approves of the measure to be put into operation in the first instance on a small scale with a brigg of 150 or 200 tons. As Mr. Richards is now in England, where he arrived with his family the last of August after a short and pleasant passage,³ he will probably mature this plan with his European concern before his return the next year. I should therefore wish that you and Mr. Willing would make up your minds on the subject, whether to take one half of this concern or no.

I am, dear sir, with esteem

D. C.

During the period from 1810 to 1815 little could be done with the Maine Lands. While John Black must have exercised a perfunctory supervision over them, the war and the British occupation of eastern Maine brought operations to a standstill. There is nothing among Cobb's papers to indicate that he was even in Gouldsbrough during most of this period. John Richards had, however, gone to England with his family in 1810, and his reports to the English proprietors enabled them to see just how

³ There is in CP a letter from Richards to Cobb dated London, 24 November 1810, in which Richards speaks of his passage to England and his stay there.

badly things were going. And when he was able to go down to Maine again after the war, he was still unable to discover anything to augur success for the speculation in the years to come. The three letters that follow show that Alexander Baring was still keeping in touch with developments down east—and by now he must certainly have regretted his earlier enthusiasm for Maine—and that John Richards was not afraid to tell his English principals the truth as he saw it.

Baring to Hope and Company, London, 9 July 1812 [BaP]

Copy

London 9 July 1812

To Messrs. Hope and Co.
and To the Concerned in the Lands in Maine
Gentlemen,

Before Mr. Richards finally leaves us to return to America,⁴ it becomes necessary that some arrangement should be made with him to secure his future services in the management and superintendence of your concerns, and also that I should submit to you a statement of your accounts with Baring Brothers and Co., which have not been settled since our first agreement with Mr. Richards in 1804.⁵ These two points will form the subject of this letter, and I begin with the situation of Mr. Richards, upon which I shall merely have to put to paper what has been already verbally approved by Messrs. Hope. The last agreement with Mr. Richards in 1804 was that he should have for 10 years, viz. from 1804 to 1813 both inclusive, a salary of £800 per annum, one tenth part of the profit resulting from the speculations in which you are interested, and that you should advance him a capital for the management of the commercial projects in which he was engaged of £5,000. It does not appear quite clear whether this capital was or was not to bear interest, the recollection of none of the parties as to this point being very distinct.

⁴ Richards had presumably been in England since 1810. Apparently he returned to Boston as planned, despite the outbreak of war. The fact that he could be appointed a trustee for the European partners (see below in this letter) indicates that he must have become an American citizen, despite his earlier distaste for such a move. See above, p. 656.

⁵ Richards had also gone abroad in 1804. What is here called the "first" agreement must have been drawn up then. Actually the first agreement was negotiated in 1797 (see above, p. 887, note 2) and the one of 1804 was the second.

Mr. Richards's situation is since this agreement materially altered. He did, with your consent, remove his residence from Maine to Boston, leaving Mr. Black in the former country. It was thought that his presence at the seat of government would be beneficial to the concern, and it has proved eminently so, more especially since effecting the arrangement with the State of Massachusetts for compromising the settling duties, which I shall presently have to explain; but at the same time this change was a great personal convenience to Mr. Richards. It has enabled him to advance his commercial pursuits, which I have great pleasure in saying are now in a promising state; and his situation in general will therefore enable me to propose, and him to accept, terms for the future more consistent with the oeconomy of expenditure which considering the protracted nature of this adventure it is essential to attend to. These new proposed terms are that he shall continue to receive next year his salary of £800 according to the former agreement, that it shall then cease; that he shall further give up all claim to any portion of the profits, but that his whole compensation shall arise from the £5,000 capital advanced, being continued to him for eight years, viz. from 1814 to 1821 both inclusive, without interest, and that he shall be acquitted of all charge of interest for the past enjoyment of this capital. With this arrangement Mr. Richards is satisfied; he has always shewn the greatest moderation in his pretensions, and you are I am sure too sensibly impressed with the advantages you have derived and are in future likely to derive from his judgement and character for it to be necessary for me to add any thing on the subject.

Mr. Black, who resides and will continue to reside in Maine, has hitherto received 1,000 dollars per annum. His conduct has been in every respect most exemplary, and it is proposed by way of encouragement to allow him in addition $\frac{1}{4}$ the part of the timber rents which he may collect from the lumberers who cut timber on the tract, and also to interest him to the extent of one half in the shipments of lumber to Liverpool, in which it will be for your interest to employ a small capital of £2,000. Mr. Black has already had authority for this purpose and I am inclined to think that these two modes of compensation so far from proving a burthen are likely to be productive to the concerned as well as to Mr. Black, and Mr. Richards's general superintendence will be a security to you that this as well as every other part of your business proceeds safely and regularly. Under this arrangement your future expenditure will be restricted to the interest of Mr. Richards' capital of £5,000 and Mr. Black's salary of 1,000 dollars, and the latter will I trust be provided for by receipts on the lands

themselves which as you will perceive by the accounts has hitherto always been the case.

The account of the concerned with Baring Brothers and Co. to which I now proceed you will find stated in the inclosed account current⁶ shewing on the 30 ultimo a balance in their favor of £15,005, for which we debit on that Mr. Henry Hope and Co. for their $\frac{3}{4}$ share £11,253.15, Sir Thomas Baring and C. Wall Esquire their $\frac{1}{4}$ share 3,751.5, by which this account will be closed,⁷ and in future we shall furnish you annually with a statement of occurrences on this account.

There are one or two points in the present accounts requiring explanation. You will find it charged with Mr. Richards' annual salary of £800 and with his capital of £5,000. There are only three years in which the general expenditure exceeded the receipts by small sums, viz. in 1804 by £75, in 1808 by £70, and in 1810 by £86.12.2. In other years the receipts for land sold, timber rents etc. sufficed for all expences including Mr. Black's salary, and you will perceive that remittances have been actually made at different times to the extent of £2,159.19. In considering the general state of this account you will please always to recollect that altho' the whole balance seems large, yet that it is not all expended, but that the capital of £5,000 advanced to Mr. Richards will be returned to the concerned in due time.

The article of charge in this account for a compromise of settling duties requires a more detailed explanation. The 1,200,000 acres on the Penobscot River were purchased by Mr. Bingham with 1,000,000 other acres on the Kennebec River of the State of Massachusetts, and the deeds for one half of this property were lodged with the state as a security for the following engagement, viz. that the purchasers would either place 2,500 settlers on these lands or pay a forfeit of 30 dollars for each deficient settler.

The legislature of Massachusetts in 1806 instituted an inquiry in how far this engagement had been complied with, and it appeared that there were on the two tracts 425 settlers, viz. 325 on the Penobscot and 100 on the Kennebec, and the fine for deficiency which for the whole number of 2,500 settlers would have amounted to 75,000 dollars, appeared to be in the proportion 62,250 dollars. After much negociation with a

⁶ These accounts, dated 30 June 1812, and covering the period from 1804 to 1812, are in BaP. Including Richards's salary, his advance of £5,000 and a £2,000 charge for the settlement with Massachusetts in 1807, the total expenses come to a little over £17,000. Something over £2,000 had been received from Richards and Black.

⁷ Sir Francis Baring had divided his quarter share in the English half of the Penobscot tract between his eldest son, Thomas, and his partner, Charles Wall.

committee of the legislature in which our interests were most ably maintained by Mr. Richards, General Cobb and Mr. Hare, a compromise was effected by granting to certain individuals with whose guarantee the state was satisfied, 60,000 acres of lands from Mr. Bingham's Kennebec tract and as these acres are only valued at half a dollar each, you will perceive that this penalty was compromised for less than one half of its nominal amount, and the deeds were taken out of mortgage and thus relieved from all incumbrance.⁸ Mr. Bingham's estate having surrendered these 60,000 acres, estimated at 30,000 dollars, it remains to be stated in what proportion the 1,200,000 acres on the Penobscot should contribute thereto. If 2,200,000 acres incur a fine of 75,000 dollars so will 1,200,000 on Penobscot be liable to a fine of

	\$40,910
from this deducting for 325 settlers found on this tract	
at 30 dollars per head	<u>9,750</u>
The Penobscot tract will owe for deficient	\$31,160
But the net sum due to the state was	\$75,000
deducting for 425 settlers on both tracts at 30	<u>12,750</u>
remains	\$62,250

This sum was actually discharged or compromised as you have seen for 60,000 acres costing 30,000 dollars; say therefore if the whole sum due or \$62,250 be discharged by \$30,000, so will the nett amount of fine due from the Penobscot lands of \$31,160 be discharged by \$15,017 and of this sum \$7,508½ or ½ belong to you and the other half to Mr. Bingham's estate.

To this sum of	\$7,508½
should be added interest at 5 per cent from 1 July 1807	
to 30 June 1812	<u>1,877</u>
	9,385½

and on the other hand deducted for one half of 2,000 acres of land and a house granted to General Cobb, the agent for Mr. Bingham, and estimated by Mr. Richards

\$3,400	<u>1,700</u>
leaves the nett sum with which you are charged	\$7,685½

or at the exchange of 10 per cent discount £1,921.7.6 sterling, the sum which is stated in the account. The exchange has varied from par to 20 per cent discount. I take the medium rate.

I hope this statement will have made this transaction intelligible to you. It is made from a sketch of Mr. Richards's and altho' I have no doubt

⁸ See above, pp. 1212-1222.

that Mr. Bingham's American trustees will be satisfied with it, as I am, it is understood that should any objections come from them, I shall be at liberty to state them. The only doubt that can exist is as to the value of the 60,000 acres of land surrendered by Mr. Bingham's estate, which appear to me valued low at half a dollar, but Mr. Richards states that this valuation was concurred in by Mr. Hare and I am therefore satisfied.⁹

I inclose a project of a letter to be written by Messrs. Hope and Co. to Mr. Thomas Mayne Willing desiring him to join the name of Mr. Richards with his own as trustees of your title. Since the failure of Mr. Cramond and the consequent withdrawing of his name from the trust, that of Mr. Willing has alone continued, and it becomes necessary for your security to add a second. Upon the important question of whether you should continue to hold this property together as an association, which has already been verbally discussed, I shall not now touch, as it is not necessary that it be determined before Mr. Richards's departure, for in whatever shape the property be held, I am sure you cannot do better than either collectively or individually to avail yourselves of his agency. I remain with constant devotion and regard

etc. etc.

ALEXR. BARING

Richards to Sir Thomas Baring, Winchester, England,
24 August 1812 [BaP]

Winchester the 24th August 1812

Sir Thomas Baring, Baronet

My dear Sir,

I have many apologies to make for the neglect with which I have pass'd over the enquiries of yours of the 13th instant upon the Maine lands, on behalf of yourself and Mr. Wall, and am happy that a longer detention in England than I had expected gives me an opportunity of replying to them here.

The undivided half or moiety of 1,200,000 acres of lands in Maine which was purchased by Messrs. Hope and Co. in 1797 of Mr. Bingham,¹ and $\frac{1}{4}$ of which moiety, or 150,000 acres, was conveyed by them

⁹ The Bingham trustees would be glad to put a low valuation on the three townships, for by so doing it would appear that they had saved a great deal of money in the settlement with Massachusetts.

¹ Richards takes the date of the final settlement when the trusteeship was established on 1 June 1797. See above, p. 675.

to the late Sir Francis Baring, was then vested in the names of Thomas M. Willing and William Cramond, Esquires, both of Philadelphia, who then sign'd to a declaration of trust which is now in the possession of Messrs. Hope and Co.

In 1804 Cramond became a bankrupt and his title was immediately transferred to Mr. T. M. Willing, in whom the whole fee is now vested.

But Messrs. Hope and Co. propose that Mr. Willing shall reconvey to me immediately upon my arrival in America the same share which was represented by Cramond, and measures have been taken to carry this into effect. It will be my business to see the deeds properly recorded and to send back to England a declaration of trust with my signature.

It is desirable that this property should appear held in such a manner as not to be liable to the inconveniences attending the tenure of real estate, the greatest of which would be that in case of the death of either of the proprietors and the bequest of his share to a minor, the whole property would be lock'd up during such non-age. This is effectually guarded against on the part of the American side, Mr. Bingham having left the whole of his estate in the hands of trustees; and it has been hitherto provided against here, from being consider'd as a species of personal or commercial property vested in the House of Hope, who have appointed trustees to hold it, agents to manage it, accounting with the different proprietors, according to their respective shares or interests therein, in a manner previously understood and agreed upon between the parties.

This statement will I trust serve for the elucidation of the state of the title.

As to the *value* of the property, it is more difficult to speak with precision because *no permanent* value can be attached to American lands, which never are a source of revenue, not being let upon lease. Their value must be a transient or speculative one considered strictly as articles of sale and depending upon the demand of the market for lands in the gross, or upon the spot of the farm to the settler.

These lands were bought in 1797, having a double object in the investment: security as a deposit, beyond the reach of the storms then agitating Europe; and speculative in America, which was then wonderfully active there. Théy cost 2/ the acre.

We at first pursued the plan of Sir W. Pulteney by endeavouring to anticipate a value by forced improvements, but finding the practical experiment fell very short of our theory and expectations and the general disposition to speculate in American lands becoming extinct, we convert-

ed our plans of forced improvements into a liberal encouragement of the natural progress of settlement and population, determining to sell in gross whenever opportunities might occur and always providing a quantity of lots laid out and survey'd for the accommodation of the actual settler.

If these lands should be sold at auction in America, I should not think they would command any thing like first cost, because the capital of that country has been materially diminished of late years as well as the disposition to speculate in lands. Therefore their *speculative value* is small.

But as objects of settlement, it is to be observ'd that in 1798 we sold to settlers with difficulty at 50 cents or $2/3$ the acre and that we now sell with ease at two or three dollars the acre and that the *average returns* of 1810 yield a sum of \$1.70 or about $7/8$ d the acre, so that the *real value* is much increas'd.

We have only sold one township of about 20,000,² which netted about $4/$ and the funds were remitted therefor. We have also sold about 30,000 acres by the single lot for about \$42,000, for which we have receiv'd in part about \$8,000 and given deeds for about 10,000 acres, reserving the remaining 20,000 acres as security for the notes for \$34,000 remaining due. But as we make it a rule to extend the time of payment to a settler almost to suit his convenience (as we want his labour and improvements more than his money), this is a fund which must be expected to accumulate in the present state of the concern and will not for some years produce returns.

On the question of retaining the property, my present opinion is that is more a matter of necessity than of choice, because from existing circumstances in America the speculative or selling price, if forced, would certainly fall below the real price which it must ultimately net provided our plans can be continued and the lands held till prosperity has returned to that country, in which case I think it highly probable that a handsome but not a large profit may be look'd for upon this investment. You must be aware also that the circumstance of your share being an undivided one must diminish its value in the estimation of any indifferent purchaser, and would probably confine its being sought after to those only who are already interested in the concern.

I have been unable to give you any idea of the value without entering into this prolix statement of the affairs of the concern, and if your leisure or inclination should lead you to a further acquaintance [?] with it, I should recommend your sending [?] to [?] Mr. Hope for his book of

² This was presumably the sale to Joseph Tilden. See above, p. 1223.

the Maine lands [?] containing the correspondence and accounts relative [?] to [?] this property.³

From what I have said you will easily perceive the difficulty in fixing a positive value and that my opinion is in favour of retaining to selling at present.

My Father desires his particular compliments. I beg to be respectfully remembered to Lady Baring, to Mr. and Mrs. Wall and remain, dear sir,

Your devoted humble servant,

J. RICHARDS

We intend leaving Winton on Wednesday next.

Richards to Sir Thomas Baring, Boston, 15 October 1815 [BaP]

Sir Thomas Baring, Baronet
Stratten

Boston 15 October 1815

My dear Sir,

I assure you that I have not been unmindful of the promise I made you on leaving England to impart freely and candidly my real sentiments on the value and prospects of the Maine Lands to assist your means of determining whether it would be more desirable to retain or dispose of them if opportunity should offer, and since my return here my motives for silence must have been obvious to you. All letters sent during the war were liable to examination and the avowal of foreign ownership might have been prejudicial, certainly dangerous. It also became a doubtful question to which nation upon the return of peace these lands would belong, having been occupied by a British force, by an inexplicable policy, and much to the injury of the proprietors; they were finally evacuated and restored.

But peace being again restored and the growing energies of the country returned to their natural state, it would appear as of course that these lands should with the other property of this country benefit from the change and assume an ameliorated condition; but the reasons which will I fear retard the wished for advancement are of too deep a root to be shaken by any comparative degree of prosperity without the lapse of many years. For the *facts* of an inhospitable climate, of a soil of worse repute than it deserves, as well of a population resident who are unsuited to agriculture, will always deter emigrants from spreading rapidly over Maine, and while the milder southern climates attract almost the whole surplus population south of the Connecticut River, Maine appears to receive a

³ The questionable readings are the result of the letter's being badly torn in one place.

sparse supply only as a species of drain from Vermont and New Hampshire.

However these accounts may vary with that theory which caused the first purchase, the experience of several years has confirmed me in the full persuasion of their truth and justice; and tho' the investment has long ceased to be eligible, at the convulsed state of Europe, when made, it was doubtless prudent. At that moment the agriculture of America was receiving daily expansion and commerce had been comparatively neglected; but the advantages of a neutral trade unfolding themselves soon after diverted capital from agriculture into commercial pursuits. The Jacobin policy which brought with it the plagues of Embargo, Non Inter-course and war either paralyzed or destroyed the commercial capital of the country without opening new prospects to the agriculturists. From this dilemma we are now to extricate ourselves, and unless the demand for lumber arising from a general state of peace should bring the Maine lands into notice, I fear the circumstances of climate and opinion will operate for many years strongly against our interests.

The course of improvement which I have ever thought necessary has been to give every assistance to the natural progress of settlement without forcing unnaturally; and the consequence has been that the prices of these lands, not buoyed up unnaturally, have remained stationary during the war, while those of all others have materially declined. But no payments of consequence have been made and we never give deeds till the lands are paid for. In fact, the lands are in a manner lent to the settler, whose improvements add a value to the whole tract.

I have been insensibly led into a general description of these lands which has estranged me from the question of their actual value; upon that however it must be remarked that many national causes since their purchase have contributed to depress them and that the present want of capital and general disposition to emigrate looking southwards also operates materially against them, so that I think it would be more to your interest *to sell out* whenever you could to your satisfaction than to retain.

I trust you will duly appreciate the motives which have led me to this frank and open disclosure, originating from the desire you expressed at parting and which, however unpleasant it may be for you to receive, I think it better for you to understand fully and explicitly than for there to be any appearance of keeping you in the dark. Mrs. Richards unites with me in respectful remembrances to Lady Baring, yourself and family and I remain, Dear Sir,

Your very obedient and faithful servant
JOHN RICHARDS

*Cobb to Hare, Boston, 4 November 1816 [BP]*⁴

Charles W. Hare, Esquire

Boston November 4th. 1816

Dear Sir:

After a summer spent in Maine, I have now returned to this place, where, and in the neighbourhood I shall remain for the winter. I have been gratified in viewing the progress of our settlements, and altho' the number of inhabitants are not essentially increas'd, yet their improvements are greatly advanced; and arrangements have been made, and I presume will be carried into compleat effect, by which our receipts from that country will far exceed any we have heretofore experienced; and I shall be much disappointed if they do not, in the course of the ensuing year, exclusive of the sale of land, amount to more than the expence of management. Our great road from Penobscot to the St. Croix will be made better by bridges and causeways the present season, from the resources we have there; and altho' the season has been very unpropitious, yet I think the poor devils there will have the means of weathering another winter. I am not able to give you any material information about the Kennebeck tract. I have occasionally convers'd with Mr. Otis, but I believe no measures have been taken to prevent evils that must result to the devisees of that tract. Our legislature have already incorporated the inhabitants of two townships in that tract,⁵ on the last of which, I presume not an inhabitant has any title to a rod of the land, and consequently, by a law of this State, will have the value of the lands settled by others, not the owners. It has ever been our principle, not to promise any settler or person to occupy any land without an agreement for the price of it.

In my letter of last April to Mr. Milligan⁶ I informed him that during the mad reign of Mr. Gerry in this State, the legislature, for the first time, levied a tax on all the wild lands that had been sold to individuals not settled or incorporated. As these taxes were in my opinion unconstitutional, and no law had been made for the collection of them, I gave myself no concern about them, presuming that some future legislature would repeal the law. But at the close of the last winter session of the legislature, they, by a Resolve directed the Treasurer to issue his warrants for the sale of such lands to the amount of the taxes, if they were not paid before the first of last September. At the last summer session, after a conference

⁴ There is an almost identical copy of this letter in CP.

⁵ Bingham was incorporated in 1812, Moscow and Kingfield in 1816. Cobb is probably referring to the latter two.

⁶ This letter, dated Boston, 11 April 1816, is in CP.

with Mr. Otis, I presented a petition on the subject to the legislature as your agent, in consequence of which, they suspended the operation of the Resolve of last winter untill the further order of the legislature. Whether we shall ever be exonerated, legislatively, from this imposition is very uncertain.⁷ My private opinion is we shall not be, as public opinion is too strong against us. The next question is, shall we contend with the State on the illegality of this assessment? Mr. Richards, before he embark'd for England the last spring, was decidedly of this opinion. I however have my doubts. I think we had better attempt a relief thro' the legislature, and if we do not succeed, pay it. The annual amount of this tax, in both towns is 343 dollars, and it has been unpaid for 3 or 4 years.

In my letter of the 7th. May 1815,⁸ I forwarded to you a ruff sketch of my account with the trustees of Mr. Bingham's estate, taken then chiefly from memory. I now inclose a new account from actual documents, not essentially different from the former sketch. In this account you will observe a charge of \$519.38 which I paid to Mr. Richards last May. This was occasioned by the late unhappy war. Just before Mr. Richards's departure the last spring, Colonel Black came up from Maine and adjusted the concern accounts with him, leaving the above ballance against the trustees, being the one half. This account was created by the taxes on the incorporated lands to State, County and Town and a remnant of Mr. Black's stipend which could not be met entirely during that period from accustom'd receipts of mills, log rents and meadows. Knowing your unwillingness to meet such demands I evaded payment for a short time, but finding there would be uneasiness, I paid the account. As this, I presume will be the last you will be call'd upon for, I hope it will meet your approbation. You will perceive an important difference in the amount, between the 1st. and 2d. U.S. taxes. This was occasioned by the ignorance of the assessor for Hancock County, who assess'd no other lands of the concern but those within the incorporated towns of that county. He has however paid us for it this year.

I shall be much gratified in receiving the ballance of my account in any way most convenient to you. Treasury notes are nearly par, 7 per cents are.

The question on the seperation of Maine I think, must now be at rest; the high leaders of the party have conducted the business in such a outrageous manner that their friends are asham'd to persue the measure.

⁷ Cobb did succeed in getting this sum reduced. See above, p. 1225.

⁸ This letter is in CP. In it Cobb reviewed the state of the concern after the war, enclosed his accounts, and requested a loan.

Mr. Richards has just returned from England.

I am, dear sir, with esteem

Your obedient servant

DAVID COBB

Cobb to Hare, Boston, 11 March 1818 [CP]

C. W. Hare, Esquire

Philadelphia

My dear Sir:

Boston March 11th. 1818

I have delay'd forwarding to you the result of my petition to the legislature, under an expectation of receiving from Colonel Black the accounts and maps of the concern, on the Penobscot Million Acres, that I might have the pleasure of forwarding both at the same time; but by a late letter from him, he informs me that his various engagements this winter has prevented his finishing them. I hope to receive them soon.

I now inclose you a copy of the Resolves of the legislature predicated on my petition.⁹ I have not obtained all I could have wished, but I have got something. A deduction of more than 500\$¹ has been obtained from the amount of the taxes for the last six years, leaving a ballance due the State of 1,529.78, which I have paid into the Treasury, and in lieu of the irregular mode heretofore pursued by the State in levying taxes on these lands, a sum in gross is to be paid annually for the four ensuing years of \$288.67 for all the lands, with deductions to be made from that sum for such towns and plantations as are or may hereafter be incorporated and tax'd in either of the tracts. We have now another evil to encounter. By the laws of the State, the counties have a right to assess taxes for their maintenance, on all lands within their jurisdiction on which the State assess their taxes. The counties in which the lands are situated have already assess'd their taxes, and when I have been applied to for payment, I have replied that the subject was still before the legislature, and it was presum'd they would relinquish the state taxes. In that case they could have no demand for theirs on the lands. But as the business is now settled with the State, had we not better propose a compromise with the several counties for their taxes for the last six years, on moderate terms, and to pay them annually for the four years to come such a sum as can be agreed upon? There is no law at present authorizing counties to collect taxes on

⁹ See above, p. 1225, note 2.

¹ The accounts printed in the Resolve indicate that the saving was nearer \$250.

such wild lands as ours, but their anxiety to tax these lands may push them on illegally to collect what they have assess'd, and thence compel us by law to defend ourselves, or they will apply to the legislature for a law empowering them to collect their taxes. In either case we diminish [*sic*] our popularity in that country, which it is our interest to retain as much of as we can. I shall pass to your credit the remainder of the 2,000\$ after paying the State.

I am, etc.

D. C.

In the year 1819 supervision of the Bingham property in America passed to John Hare Powel,² whose brother, Charles Willing Hare, had been obliged because of poor health to give up his agency. Powel visited Maine in the summer of 1819 and made a thorough investigation of all that was being done.³ When Hare died the following year, Powel decided to make a clean break with the past and removed all the Bingham agents, Cobb among the rest.⁴ Though John Richards interceded for his old friend and tried to prevail upon Powel to postpone this step,⁵ the Trustee was adamant, and by the end of 1820 the General found himself without either position or salary. He was certainly much too old to be of much further use to the trustees; in the summer of 1820 he wrote Powel, "I am very infirm, but at seventy two we ought not to complain; I am so unwell at present as scarcely to hold my pen."⁶ Though the Wildes urged him to come and live with them⁷ and though other members of the family made similar offers of help,⁸ the General determined to return to his native Taunton and spend the rest of his days there.

² John Hare, brother of Charles Hare, had been adopted by his aunt, Mrs. Samuel Powel, and had taken her name. The Powel family was a prominent one in Philadelphia. See J. W. Jordan, *Colonial Families of Philadelphia*, 1. 112.

³ See Powel to Cobb, Philadelphia, 31 May 1819, and Hallowell, 7 August 1819, both in CP.

⁴ See Powel to Cobb, Philadelphia, 20 September 1820, in CP. There is a lengthy correspondence in BP between Powel and Richards on the subject of this reorganization.

⁵ See Richards to Powel, Boston, 29 December 1820, in BP.

⁶ Cobb to Powel, Gouldsborough, 26 July 1820, in BP.

⁷ See Wilde to Cobb, Newburyport, 19 April 1821, in CP.

⁸ See, for example, Thomas Cobb to Cobb, Bangor, 1 March 1821, in CP.





Sometime in 1821 he pulled up stakes and left Gouldsborough for the last time. There could have been little to make his departure a pleasant one:⁹ he had spent twenty-five years of his life in Maine, and while a few settlements had been established and a few roads cut, the central purpose of his going down east had failed of realization and nothing like adequate returns had been obtained for the large sums of money spent to develop the property.

Once back in Taunton, where he must have lived as a guest of some member of his family, the old gentleman could lead a life of quiet retirement among old friends. In 1825 Timothy Pickering asked him to write down what he remembered of the Newburgh Incident and the General prepared a careful account in reply.¹ Shortly before he died, he succeeded in obtaining a pension for his services in the Revolutionary War.² In 1829 his health became so bad that he was moved to the Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston, and there, on 17 April 1830, he died.³

Shortly before his death, his son Thomas wrote an account of the property in Gouldsborough which, in a sense, epitomizes what had happened to most of the dreams of the speculators back in the 1790's. Thomas wrote:⁴

I was at Gouldsborough about 4 weeks since, and saw the old farm etc. at the Point. Captain Stevens was then getting the hay. The house looks deserted, and is going fast to decay, and is not in fact worth repairing as that property is now situated: for if put in ever so good repair it would afford you no income, and would very soon, if it remain unoccupied, get out of repair again. Indeed, in my opinion, any expence incurred about

⁹ He may possibly have been cheered by a gift of liquor from a club in Boston of which he had formerly been a member. See W. Sullivan to Cobb, Boston, 1 August 1820, in CP.

¹ See T. Pickering to Cobb, Salem, 24 October 1825, in CP. The original of Cobb's reply is printed in O. Pickering, *Life of Timothy Pickering*, I, 431-433. See above, p. 441. There is a copy in CP.

² See a printed claim form in CP dated 17 July 1828. Cobb was to receive the pay of a captain of artillery.

³ See J. W. Porter, "General David Cobb of Gouldsborough, Maine," 2 *Coll. Me. Hist. Soc.*, VI, 5.

⁴ Quoted from Thomas Cobb to Cobb, Castine, 5 September 1828, in CP.

that estate would be thrown away. You cannot keep a tenant on the place, for he would want the whole of the income to maintain him, and a good deal more. . . . There being no stock kept on it, the grass will soon begin to fail, and the fences will be decaying: and will require great expence to rebuild them. . . .

The reasons for the failure of the Bingham speculation during the years of David Cobb's agency are not hard to discover. In the first place, the very assumptions on which it was based were unsound. As Paul D. Evans has pointed out,⁵ a land speculator in the period after the Revolution could be successful only at the expense of the settler. Once he had paid for his land—and most of the speculators were unable to take even this first step—the proprietor was naturally eager to realize returns on his investment. Barring a lucky sale to Europeans, he would have to make his profits from retail sales to actual settlers. Yet these same settlers seldom had the ready money with which to purchase land. Americans with comfortable bank accounts were unlikely to wish to set themselves up in frontier regions; those who did go into new country nearly always used up what resources they had in getting established. And it might be years before these settlers would be in a position to make payments to the proprietor. This state of affairs was anything but satisfactory to the speculator; furthermore, he was often bound by the terms of his contract to perform settling duties. The natural result was friction between the absentee proprietor and the settler, and the former was lucky if that friction did not assume serious proportions. Had the state governments during this period abandoned their attempt to make wild lands a source of revenue, had they adopted a policy similar to that of the Homestead Act of a later time, much human misery and financial loss might have been avoided. As it was, few if any of the speculators in wild lands did better than break even.⁶

In addition to this basic dilemma that was characteristic of

⁵ See P. D. Evans, "The Pulteney Purchase," *New York Historical Association Quarterly Journal*, III. 102-103.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 99. For further evidence on this point see also Evans, *Holland Land Company*, *passim*.

land speculation in general, Bingham's attempt to develop Maine labored under additional handicaps. Incomplete knowledge of the country and an incorrect analysis of the course which American economic development was to follow led both Bingham and Cobb to believe that the future success of the speculation lay in the establishment of the typical New England farming community down east and in the discouragement of lumbering. Unfortunately, the region which Bingham selected was not then, nor is it now, suited to farming. Thus the attempt to force agricultural settlements was doomed from the start. It was also unfortunate that Bingham selected the Penobscot rather than the Kennebec tract for his initial experiments. Alexander Baring must bear a good share of the responsibility for these decisions; impressed by what Charles Williamson had been doing on the Pulteney Purchase, he urged Bingham to follow a similar policy in Maine.⁷ Not until it was too late did the proprietors discover that Williamson's program was proving a costly failure. Since Baring steadfastly refused to have anything to do with the Kennebec region, Bingham was given no choice but to initiate on the Penobscot tract his program for the manufacture of land.

Before he left America for the last time, Bingham had correctly diagnosed what was wrong with his Maine speculation and had begun to realize that his only hope was to wait until the flow of settlement finally reached his property.⁸ This policy of watchful waiting was eventually adopted by the Trustees and proved a sound one. Ironically, when the land did begin to sell, it was the Kennebec tract, on which almost no money had been expended, rather than the Penobscot Million, which had received the concerted attention of principals and agents alike, that proved most attractive to purchasers. When John Black took over the agency for both tracts in 1820, the makings of a boom in Maine timber lands were already present. Black wisely abandoned all attempts to promote agriculture and turned his attention to the lumber. As a result, he eventually succeeded in making Bing-

⁷ See Baring's "Observations on Maine Lands," above, pp. 734-740.

⁸ See above, pp. 1167-1168.

ham's Maine property profitable for the first time in its history.⁹ Bingham and Cobb were following the speculative pattern of their day; they simply failed to realize until too late that their basic premises were unsound. Black was fortunate in assuming responsibility for the Maine property just as a new era was opening; but he showed remarkable judgment in all that he did, and the success of his agency was due in large measure to his own abilities.¹

A visitor to Gouldsborough today would find hardly a trace of the grandiose schemes for its development which had been started in the 1790's. Parts of the roads appear to have been untouched since General Cobb and his road-cutters first laid them out. Where the General's house stood on Garden Point is a dilapidated structure, indistinguishable from thousands of others in Maine seacoast towns. What were to be city lots are still pasture; the harbor is still undeveloped; the maritime activity is still in the hands of fishermen. A glance at a map of the Penobscot tract today shows that many of the Lottery Townships are

⁹ For Black's operations, see R. G. Wood, *History of Lumbering in Maine, 1820-1861*, *University of Maine Studies*, 2nd Series, No. 33, *passim*. See also W. Allen, "Bingham Land," *1 Coll. Me. Hist. Soc.*, 358-360. Allen says that Black was able eventually to indemnify the Bingham estate "for the first cost and interest, forty-two years, and to refund all moneys paid for taxes and agencies, and Colonel Black's fees." In the absence of documentation, I should like to question the above statement, especially the part about the interest. For a statement of sales on the Penobscot tract through 1835, see John Black's accounts in BaP. These indicate that close to one and one half million dollars worth of land had been sold by 1835, most of it during the land boom of that year, and that about \$500,000 had actually been remitted. I have not been able to discover how much of the rest was ever collected.

At about the same time Black reported selling 250,000 acres on the Kennebec, some at three dollars an acre. See R. G. Wood, *Lumbering in Maine, Univ. of Me. Studies*, 2nd Ser., No. 33, 75. Again it is difficult to determine how much of this and his other sales on the Kennebec was collected, especially in view of the panic which followed this boom so closely.

My guess is that the Bingham Estate got back the initial investment and disbursements for improvements and probably got some more or less regular income from the property after 1835. As to the accumulated interest from 1793 to 1835, which would have been well over a million dollars, I am in doubt. If Allen's statement is correct, the money must have been made from the Kennebec, rather than the Penobscot, tract.

¹ The only biographical material on Colonel Black that I have discovered is the short article in *Bangor Historical Magazine*, IV. 61-65. There is some additional genealogical material on the Black family in A. H. Davis, *History of Ellsworth*, 32-35. See the portrait of Black reproduced facing page 906.

still unincorporated. Cobb's "great road" from Eddington to Calais, which cuts through the heart of the Penobscot Million, passes through no town with a population of more than two hundred. For nearly one hundred and fifty years, this section of Maine has resisted development as stubbornly as it did when Bingham and Cobb first tried to make it "blossom like the rose." Today it is hard to realize that this unproductive territory was once the concern of wealthy Philadelphia merchants, French émigrés, English noblemen, and Revolutionary generals.

Appendices

Appendices

Among the Bingham and Cobb Papers there are many accounts and balance sheets, representing practically every phase of the Maine Land speculation. In most cases, in addition, bundles of vouchers exist to verify the accounts themselves. The most important of these accounts have been collected here. When read consecutively, they give a clear picture of the basic financial expenditures made in connection with the Maine purchase. In many cases more detailed breakdowns of items in these basic accounts can be found in the Bingham and Cobb Papers. There are several mistakes in addition in Appendices E, F, G, and H.

APPENDIX A [BP]

Account of Sums Paid by William Bingham for Lands Purchased of the State of Massachusetts for the Years 1792, 1793, 1794 & 1795.

		1792	Dollars and cents
Dec. 21	To Cash paid Samuel Geise for maps of the sea coast in 4 vols., including the Province of Maine lands		100.
<hr/>			
		1793	
Jan. 1	To do. pd. for a draft on Boston to Thomas Davis, Treasurer of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, for an installment due on said lands 1st June 1792 as per contract with the Committee on the Sale of Eastern Lands dated 1st July 1791		25,000.
	To do. pd. do. being the amount of interest due on said installment from 1st June 1792 to 30th Jany. 1793		983.
	To do. pd. do. being an installment due by virtue of a contract made with the Committee 3rd March 1792		5,000.
15	To do. pd. J. Sullivan Esqr. for his advice on several points relating to the purchase of these lands		50.
Mar. 3	To do. pd. Hy. Jackson's draft on W. Bingham at 10 days sight in part payment for the purchase of John Lucas's 8th share of Chandler's River Township		
		215.	
	To do. pd. do. at 10 days sight in part of do.	333.33	548.33
17	To do. pd. do. do. at do. in full of do.		158.33
	To do. pd. expences of W. Bingham and Major Jackson to, at & from Boston for the purpose of carrying into effect the contract made with the Committee for the Sale of Eastern Lands		250.

	To do.	pd. Mr. Lewis for his attention in drawing the necessary deeds of conveyance and for other business relating to the purchase	150.
29	To do.	pd. Mr. Mounwell on account of his expences to survey the Province of Maine lands	120.
Apr. 16	To do.	pd. John Hill for 3 maps of the District	25.60
24	To do.	pd. Henry Jackson's draft in favour of James Lovell being in part of 2d paymt. of De Gregoire's purchase	650.
May 5	To do.	pd. do. do. in favour of George Davis in further part of do. do.	180.
20	To do.	pd. Thomas Davis, Treasurer of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, in discharge of my bond dated 28th January 1793 due this day	24,000.
Jun. 7	To do.	pd. do. in discharge of mine & Thomas Russel's bond of same date due this day	6,000.
	To do.	pd. said Thos. Russell by his draft dated 28th May at 10 days sight being the amount of his commission at $2\frac{1}{2}$ p.ct. on the said 6,000 dolls. for his risk thereon	150.
11	To do.	pd. Henry Jackson's draft in favour of M. M. Hayes being in full for the 2d payment of De Gregoire's purchase	210.
	To do.	pd. do. do. at 10 days sight dated 23d May being cash advanc'd to Mr. Peters who has undertaken the survey of Penobscot tract	200.
13	To do.	pd. Mr. De Kraft for copying maps of the land on a large scale	49.33
14	To do.	pd. Major Jackson previous to his departure for Europe, vizt. for his passage and provisions	133.50
		For his expences on two journeys to New York	32.
		For the purpose of liquidating the debts he owed here & which were necessary to settle previous to his departure for Europe & for which W. Bingham took his bond	<u>1,100.00</u>
15	To do.	pd. Chas. W. Poleske for a draft on Lewis Poleske of London at 60 days dated this day + my order for £200 sterling which was advanc'd to Major Jackson on acct. of his expences Exch. 170	906.67
Jul. 1	To do.	pd. Z. Poulson Junr. for printing 300 copies of descript. of the situation, climate, soil etc. of the Province of Maine & for binding same	41.50
	To do.	pd. Henry Jackson's draft on W. B. at 10 days sight dated June 3d in favour of M. M. Hayes being for the purchase of Lottery Land Prizes on the Penobscot tract	400.
	To do.	pd. dos. draft on W. B. at 15 days sight dated June 11th in favour of John Coffin Jones for the payment of Cabot's demand for No. 7	1,800.

	To do.	pd. do. for making an alteration in the former draft & inserting the rivers	
Aug. 17	To do.	pd. Henry Jackson's draft on me dated July 29th at 10 days sight in favour of M. M. Hayes being the amount of the 4th installment for De Gregoire's purchase	1,125.
Sep. 24	To Cash	paid Thos. Russell for his commission as agreed upon the payment of my bond dated 28th Jany. 1793 for 6500 ds. at $2\frac{1}{2}$ p.ct. as per agreement	162.50
	To do.	pd. do. int. for 8 days on 6000 dolls.	8.
Dec. 20	To do.	pd. Wm. Duer in discharge of 5 notes given by Wm. B. dated 20th Decr. 1792 & due this day in part of the sum agreed to be paid him as a compensation for relinquishing his right to a moiety of the lands in the Province of Maine	15,000.
	To do.	pd. do. in discharge of one other note of the same date being in part for interest due on the different notes given him	5,000.
	To do.	pd. do. in discharge of one other note of same date being also for interest on same account	2,100.
31	To Amount	of interest on the various sums advanced this year as by account	7,055.02
		Carried forwards Dolls.	158,877.52

1795

Jan. 1	To Ballance	as per account to 31st Decr. 1794 brought over	158,877.01
	To Cash	paid Thomas Sambourne for copying 8 drafts of the 2 tracts belonging to the 1st and 2d purchase	58.50
27	To do.	pd. Henry Jackson's draft on W. B. in favour of M. M. Hayes for this sum, being the first installment of the last purchase made of the Gouldsborough Tract	2,220.
	To do.	pd. dos. do. in favour of do., being an installment for the first purchase of do.	415.
Mar. 7	To do.	pd. dos. do. in favour of R. Smith for part of the installment due 1st Feby. 1795	3,300.
Apr. 15	To do.	pd. dos. do. in favour of M. M. Hayes being in full of said installment but as the bond amounts only to 6500 dolls., 300 dolls. of this paymt. remains unaccounted	3,500.
	To do.	pd. dos. draft in favour of M. M. Hayes on account of this sum paid by him to Mr. Peters & Son for surveys	1,200.
May 28	To do.	pd. General Cobb's draft in favour of do. in account of his annual salary	1,000.
	To do.	pd. for a draft remitted to Boston to Henry Jackson to discharge Wm. B.'s bond due 1st June 1795 to the Treasurer of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts	23,000.

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Nov.	do. pd. for do. remitted to T. Russell to pay Wm. B.'s bond in which he is joint security due 1st June 1795 to the Treasurer	7,000.
	do. pd. Thomas Sambourne for a plan of Gouldsborough Town & Harbour	5.
	To Amount of interest on the different sums paid this year as per account	4,000.04
	Total in Dollars	204,575.55
	[Interest tables omitted.]	
Jun.	To Amount brought down	204,575.55
	To an omission of what W. B. paid on 24th June 1794 for a bill of exchange sent to Major Jackson on Messrs. Pullen & Co. for £200 sterling Exch at 180	960.
	To interest on the above sum to this day	53.80
	Total Dollars	205,589.35
	To amount brought over	205,589.35
	General Henry Knox Dr. for one third of the above	68,529.78 33/100
	William Bingham Dr. for one third of do.	68,529.78 33/100
	do. Dr. for one third of do.	68,529.78 33/100
		205,589.34 99/100
May 25	Examined and approved this account amounting to two hundred and five thousand five hundred eighty nine dollars and thirty five cents.	
	Errors excepted	
	H. KNOX	
	WM. BINGHAM	

Advances Made by William Bingham on Account of the Contract Made with the State of Massachusetts in 1792 for Lands Laying North of the Lottery Townships betwixt the Rivers Scodiack and Penobscot in the Year 1793

1793

May 26	To Cash paid Henry Jackson's drafts on W. B. in favour of M. M. Hayes at 15 days sight accepted 8th May for 1,000 & 1,200 dolls.	2,200.
28	To do. pd. dos. drafts on W. B. in favour of M. M. Hayes at 15 days sight for 1,150, 950 & 900 dollars accepted 10th May	3,000.
	To do. pd. dos. draft on W. B. in favour of do.	158.60
Oct. 1	To do. paid Royal Flint a recompence for his time and trouble in compleating the contract with the Commonwealth for the last purchase	2,500.
		7,858.60
	Interest of 2200/ from May 26th 1793 to June 1st 1795,	
	2 years and 6 days	266.16
	do. of 3158/60 from May 28th 1793 to do.,	
	2 years & 4 days	381.04
	do. of 2500/ from Octr. 1st 1794 to do.,	
	8 months	100.
		747.20
	Dollars	8,605.80

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William Bingham's Maine Lands

General Henry Knox Dr. for one half of the above

4,302.90

William Bingham Dr. for one half of do.

4,302.90

Dollars 8,605.80

1795

May 25 Examined and approved this account amounting to eight thousand six hundred and five dollars and eighty cents. Errors excepted.

H. KNOX

WM. BINGHAM

APPENDIX B [BP]

Account of Sums Paid by William Bingham for Lands Purchased of the State of Massachusetts Since the Last Account Made Out and Agreed to by General Knox on the 25th day of May 1795.

1795

May 25	To Balance of Account to this day brought forward	\$205,589.36
Jun. 23	To Cash paid to Willing & Francis being so much advanced to Major William Jackson by John & Francis Baring of London amounting (with their commission of $\frac{1}{2}$ p.cent) at the exchange of $177\frac{1}{2}$ p.cent	[sic] 1,427.10
Jul. 21	To do. paid Mr. Sambourn for drawing Peter's survey	30.
	To do. paid do. for drawing a plan of the Province of Maine	10.36
22	To do. paid Mr. Sonis [?] for copying a draft of the Province of Maine	40.
Aug. 25	To do. paid a draft of Henry Jackson's at 15 days sight dated 29th July last for this sum he paid in part of the second purchase	1,000.
Nov. 27	To do. paid Zachariah Poulson for printing 30 copies of a description of the soil situation, productions, fisheries, commerce and population of the District of Maine and the plan of association of "The New England Company"—making 12 octavo pages	12.
		\$208,108.82
Dec. 31	To Amount of interest charged (on \$205,589.36 and the foregoing advances made since the 25th May 1795) to this day inclusive	7,263.58
	Amount of principal and interest carried down	\$215,372.40

Dec. 31	To Amount of principal and interest brought down.	\$215,372.40
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1796

Jan. 24	To Cash paid a draft of David Cobb's in favor of M. M. Hayes dated the 30th December 1795 at 10 days sight	1,000.
31	To do. paid a draft of Henry Jackson's in favor of M. M. Hayes at 10 day's sight dated 11th instant	957.64
Feb. 4	To do. paid a draft of ditto dated the 3rd instant in favor of J. Anthony & Son being so much advanced General Cobb on account of improvements	1,000.
Jan. 23	To do. paid for a draft on the cashier of the Boston Branch Bank payable at sight remitted to pay William Bingham's bond to the Treasurer of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts	6,297.
Feb. 19	To do. paid a draft of David Cobb's in favor of Samuel Breck Esqr. being a compensation allowed him for his expences two journies to and from Boston on business respecting the Maine Lands	466.67

26	To do.	paid to Samuel Bradford for a service of a precept returnable to the Supreme Court of the United States in the suit against Cabot	38.50
	To do.	paid the Honble Thomas Russell for negotiating the business of paying off a bond dated 28th January 1793 to Thomas Davis, Treasurer	175.
Mar. 8	To Cash	paid to Mr. Sonis for sundry additions made to maps and inserting roads and rivers in the same	13.
31	To do.	paid a draft of General Henry Jackson's dated Boston the 12th instant at 10 days sight in favor of Daniel Gilman & Co. to pay to Mr. William Shaw in full for principal & interest of the second instalment due the 1st January last	2,310.80
May 22	To do.	paid for a draft on the Branch Bank at Boston payable at sight remitted to General Knox to deliver to the Treasurer to pay an instalment which will fall due to the State on the 1st June	30,000.
25	To do.	paid a draft of Henry Jackson's dated Boston 28th April last in favor of William Shaw and accepted the 6th inst. at 10 days sight	406.23
Jun. 3	To do.	paid to Mr. Sonis for copying map of lands in the County of Northumberland	32.
8	To do.	paid to Ashton & James Humphrey for drawing three powers of attorney at different times to General Knox	6.
10	To do.	paid five notes due the 20th December 1795 for 3,000 dolls., each being in part payment of the sum agreed to be given to William Duer for relinquishing his claim to the moiety of the purchase made of the State of Massachusetts in the District of Maine No. 1 (upon which interest is to be calculated from the 20th December 1795 at which period the money to discharge them was lodged in the bank but could not be paid by reason of an attachment)	15,000.
	To do.	paid to Jasper Moylan for a note of hand given to Duer in part compensation for his relinquishing his title to said lands, said sum being due on the 20th Decemr. 1795 and attached in my hands. The interest thereon is to be calculated from that period.	900.
			<u>\$273,975.24</u>
30	To Amount of interest charged (on \$215,372.40 and the foregoing advances made since the 31st Decemr. 1795) to this day inclusive.		8,399.72
		Amount of principal and interest carried down	\$282,374.96
Jun. 30	To Amount of principal and interest brought down		\$282,374.96
Oct. 2	To Cash	paid a draft of General Jackson's at 10 days sight in favor of William Shaw dated 20th April 1795	48.72
14	To do.	paid a draft of General Jackson's dated 16th Septemr. 1796 at 10 days sight in favor of M. M. Hayes	1,200.

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21 To Cash paid a draft of General Henry Jackson's dated the 16th September 1795[6?] in favor of M. M. Hayes at 20 days sight	1,800.
To do. paid a draft of General Jackson's of the same date in favor of ditto at 30 days sight	1,000.
	<u>\$286,423.68</u>
To Amount of interest charged (on \$282,374.96 and the foregoing advances made since the 30th June 1796) to this day inclusive	8,520.04
Total Amount of Principal and Interest to the 31st December 1796	<u>\$294,943.72</u>

[Interest tables omitted.]

The Amount of Principal advanced and the Interest thereon to the 31st December 1796	brought forward	\$294,943.72
The Amount of 5 bonds of £630.14.3 each, Massachusetts Currency, given for the second purchase of the Gouldsbrough tract which (including the interest on them) make		13,034.71
The Amount of 5 notes of 3,000 dollars each given to William Duer for relinquishing his interest in the purchase made of the District of Maine No. 1		15,000.
The Amount of 1 note given to do. for 4 year's interest on do.		3,600.
The Amount of 3 bonds given to the Treasurer of the State of Massachusetts for the remaining instalments due on the purchase of lands		92,802.
The Amount of obligations given to the State of Massachusetts to place on the two millions of acres 2,500 settlers @ \$30 each		75,000.
The Amount of obligations of similar tenor given to do. relative to the second purchase for 220 settlers at \$30 each ¹		6,600.
		<u>\$500,980.43</u>

The above amount for the purchase of District of Maine lands is to be charged to the following accounts, vizt.

On the 31st May 1795 for payments & interest to that period		
General Henry Knox Dr. for one third part	\$ 68,529.78	
William Bingham Dr. for two third parts	<u>137,059.58</u>	\$205,589.36
On the 31st Decemr. 1796 for payments & interest to said period		
General Henry Knox Dr. for one third part	\$ 29,784.78	
William Bingham Dr. for two third parts	<u>59,569.58</u>	89,354.36
Outstanding bonds and notes, as above		
General Henry Knox Dr. for one third part	\$ 68,678.90	
William Bingham Dr. for two third parts	<u>137,357.81</u>	206,036.71
Total Amount to the 31st December 1796 inclusive, as above		<u>\$500,980.43</u>

¹ For a different estimate of this obligation, see above, p. 684, note 1.

APPENDIX C [BP]

Account of Sums Paid by William Bingham for Lands Purchased of the State of Massachusetts, since the Last Account Made up to the 31st December 1796, and Forwarded to General Knox, vizt.

1796

	Total Amot. of Principal & Interest to 31st Decem. 1796	\$294,943.72
Dec. 20	To 5 notes each of 3,000 given by me to Wm. Duer for relinquishing his interest in the Maine Lands (omitted in course)	15,000
	1 ditto for interest on the above for 4 years	<u>3,600</u> 18,600.

1797

Jan. 1	To Cash paid Shaw's bond, dated 1st January 1795. paya. in 2 years for £630.14.3 Mass. curry. equal to	£788. 7.10	
	2 years interest on ditto	<u>94.12. 2</u>	
		£883. .	2,354.66
Jun. 1	To Cash remitted Genl. Knox to be paid to the Treasurer of Mass., being an installment due this day	<u>30,000.</u>	
			\$345,898.38
30	To Amot. of interest charged on \$294,943.72 and the foregoing advances to this day inclusive	<u>9,661.04</u>	
	Amount of principal and interest carried down		\$355,559.42
30	To Amot. of principal & interest brought down		\$355,559.42
	To Interest from 30th June 1797 to 31st December is 6 mos.	<u>10,666.78</u>	
			\$366,226.20

Dec. 31	To Amot. of principal & interest to this day brot. down	\$366,226.20
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1798

Jan. 1	To Cash paid Shaw's bond, dated 1st Jany. 1795, paya. in 3 years for £788.7.10; 3 years interest £141.18.2	2,480.80
May 14	To Cash paid Henry Jackson, the balance of Shaw's account for 3d purchase of Gouldsborough Tract, principal \$861.27, interest 60.18	921.45
Jun. 1	To Cash remitted Genl. Knox to be paid to the Treasurer of Massa. being an installment due this day	<u>30,000.</u>
		\$399,628.45
30	To Amot. of interest charged on \$366,226.20 and the foregoing advances to this day inclusive	<u>11,218.25</u>
	Amot. of principal & interest carried down	\$410,846.70
30	To Amot. of principal & interest to this day brot. down	\$410,846.70

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To Cash pd. Genl. Jackson's draft dated April 1797 & which by mistake was carried to the account of the District of Maine settlement	480.
To Interest on the same from 11th July 1797 to 30 June 1798	<u>27.12</u>
	\$411,353.82
Dec. 31 To Interest from 30th June to 31 Dec. 1798. 6 mos.	<u>12,340.61</u>
	\$423,694.43

1799

	To Amot. of principal & interest to this day brot. down	\$423,694.43
Jan. 1	To Shaw's bond, due this day paid	2,606.93
23	To Fee to Mr. Tilghman, Wilkes vs. Duer's notes	40.
Feb. 6	To Cash pd. Major Wm. Jackson by Messrs. Baring in London the 20th Apl. 1795 £244.4.10 stg. at par	
	£407. 1.4	
	Interest until this day	<u>92.14.5</u>
		£499.15.9
	To this sum being the balance of his acct. of expenses in Europe relative to the sale of the Maine Lands, which he presented Jany. 8th 1799, stg.	
	£391.15.5	
	Interest from 8th May 1795 untill 6th February 1799	
	88. 0.4	
	£479.15.9 is	<u>799.12.11</u>
		£1,299. 8. 8
	is	\$3,465.15
	Deduct therefrom cash advanced Major Jackson previous to his departure for Europe for which I took his bond & which is charged under date of the 14 June 1793	
	\$1,100.	
	Interest to 6th Feby. 1799	<u>371.89</u>
		1,471.89
		1,993.26
Jun. 1	To Cash remitted the Treasurer of Massachusetts for installment due this day	<u>32,802.</u>
		\$461,136.62
30	To Amot. of interest to this day p. account	<u>13,154.84</u>
	Amount of payments & interest to 30th June 1799 [Interest tables omitted.]	\$474,291.46

APPENDIX D [BP]

1799

Jun. 30	To Amount of principal and interest brought forward	474,291.46
	Interest to 31 December 1799 6 mos.	<u>14,228.74</u>
		488,520.20

1800

	To Amount of principal and interest brought down	488,520.20
Jan. 22	To Cash paid Shaws bond	<u>2,740.08</u>
		491,260.28

1805

Dec. 31	To Amount of interest to this day p. account	209,143.59
	To Expenses of Maine settlement with interest pr. account	45,243.73
	To Advances for lands to the northward of Lottery Townships p. ac.	<u>17,203.56</u>
		Drs. 762,851.16

[Interest tables omitted.]

APPENDIX E [BP]

Memorandum of Engagements Entered into on Ac. of the Concern in the Purchase of Eastern Lands.

1791

Jul. 1 Flint & Jackson their bond for 5,000 dollars to the State for the fullfilment of the agreement this day—to be given up on the payment of 25,000 dollars first payment 5,000.

1792

Feb. 1 Flint & Jackson their joint note to Mr. Lucas, payable Feby. 1. 1793, for purchase of $\frac{1}{8}$ township Channers River—having paid £203.15.4 pr. Ac.—whole quantity of land 6,000 acres 666.2/3

1 Flint & Jackson their joint note to Mr. Cabot for part of Township No. 7 payable January 12th, 1793, say 7,330 acres at 20 cents 1,666.2/3

22 Flint & Jackson's contract with Willm. Shaw for the purchase of part of Gouldsborough, having paid £200. lmy. containing 8,000 acres at 1/6

Obligation payable June 1. 93 133.6.8 1,333.1/3

do. do. Sept. 1. 94 133.6.8

do. do. Sept. 1. 95 133.6.8

Apr. 18 Flint & Jackson their bond to the Committee for the fullfilment of their agreement April 1792 5,000.

Mar. 17 Henry Jackson note of hand to William Tudor for 1,000 guineas payable March 1st, 1793 4,666.2/3

Apr. 18 Henry Jacksons note of hand to the Committee Sale Eastern Lands, payable in thirty days from the date 5,000.

Aug. 7 Henry Jacksons bond for the three last payments purchase of Mount Desert, etc. Have paid £311.19. in cash on receiving the deeds—50,000 acres at 6d lmy. pr. acre

Bond payable April 1. 1793 £311.19

do. Decr. 4. 1793 311.19 3,119.50

do. Augt. 4. 1794 311.19

Dollars 26,452.2/3

Besides the above, H. Jackson is under several engagements to pay on ac. of Madam Lavals purchase and the attachment of De Gregoires purchase say 300.

Boston Augt. 7. 1792. Errors excepted.

H. JACKSON

Memorandum of the several installments for the purchase of parts No. 7 & 8. Also Nos. 9, 10, 11, & 12, with the deductions for public lotts & for the settlers. Say the whole quantity to be paid for is 100,000 acres—at 20 cents is

William Bingham's Maine Lands

		<i>Dollars</i>
Cash paid in part pr. receipt	2,000.	20,000.
First installment Feby. 1. 1793	4,500.	
Second do. Feby. 1. 1794	4,500.	
Third do. Feby. 1. 1795	4,500.	
Fourth do. Feby. 1. 1796	<u>4,500.</u>	
Dollars		20,000.

The above sums are exclusive of interest at 6 pr. ct. pr. ann.

APPENDIX F [BP]

The Estate of the Late William Bingham Esqr. of Philada. in Acct. Current with Henry Jackson of Boston.

1792

Mar.	To Cash paid Nathan Jones & John Peters acct. for surveying French Grant £31.5.6	\$ 104.25
Jun. 28	To do. pd. John Peters surveying Townships No. 14, 15 & 16. p. contract with him	100.
Sep. 24	To do. pd. Jos. Wall. attorney, fees in cause of De Gregoire	12.
Nov.	To do. pd. Saml. & Stn. Westons acct. for exploring 100,000 acres in Kennebeck £49.10	165.
	To do. pd. Henry Dearborn, p. order for his services do.	25.
Dec. 28	To do. pd. Thos. Wallcot, copying land journals, contracts etc.	11.

1793

Jan. 24	To do. pd. Joseph Pierpoints act. copying 50 townships, lakes, rivers, maps, etc. p. account £10.10	35.
30	To do. pd. E. Larkins bill stationary	3.77
Feb. 4	To do. pd. at Secretary's office, for sundry papers, etc.	20.
	To do. pd. my note to John Lucas for amot. of second payment of Chandler River purchase, dated Feby. 4th. 1792 with interest for £200. Interest on do. £12.10	708.33
21	To do. pd. Benja. Russell printing 2 qrs. blanks	5.
	To do. pd. his note to Thos. Davis Treasr. dated Jany. 30, 1793	983.
Mar.	To do. pd. Thos. Wallcot, for copying sundry journals, etc. p. act.	24.42
Apr.	To do. pd. Jos. Hall for deeds & special contracts with La Roche	20.
1	To do. pd. my bond dated Augt. 4, 1792, to Perez Mor-ton on acct. of De Gregoire's purchase 182.17	
4	To do. pd. to De Gregoire & wife do. do. 69.02	
	To do. pd. to Letombe Consul do. do. 60.	
		£311.19
May 1	To my note to him, for so much pr. Sam. Phillips & Leonard Jarvis for first instalment on contract April 18, 1792 for 5,200.00	1,039.84
	To Interest on note at bank 78.	
	To Discount on do. do. 28.60	
	To Cash pd. Brokerage on drafts on him 52. 158.60	5,358.60
23	To do. pd. Thos. Davis Treasr. in part of his bonds for \$30,000 (10,000 dolls. pd. by Thos. Russell Esqr.)	20,000.
24	To do. pd. John Peters surveying Trenton No. 8 & plan	8.
26	To do. pd. Thomas Wallcot copying instruments of con-tracts, etc.	8.

Jun. 11	To do. pd. my note to Royal Flint, dated Feby 1st, 1792 with interest, being amot. purchase of part No. 7 Township of Cabot & others	£500. .	
	Interest for 16 months	<u>40. .</u>	
		£540. .	1,800.
Jul.	To do. pd. Jacob. Wicks for a trunk		1.67
Oct. 24	To do. pd. Benjn. Russell, printing 300 advertisements against incroachments		3.
Nov. 5	To do. pd. Mr. Monwell p. receipt		120.
Dec. 24	To do. pd. my bond to De Gregoire & wife dated Augt. 4th 1792 with interest after 1 year for 164. 1. 4		
	Interest on do.	<u>3. 6. 8</u>	
		£167. 8.	558.
	Amot. carried forward		\$31,113.88
	To Amount brought forward		\$31,113.88
Dec. 24	To Cash pd. my bond to S. Verow dated Augt. 4th 1792 for Gregoire purchase	72.19.2	
	Interest on do.	<u>1.12.6</u>	
		£74.11.8	248.62

1794

Jan. 4	To do. pd. do. to Francis Garrand, dated do. Gregoire purchase	74.18.8	
	Interest on do. 5 months	<u>1.17. .</u>	
		£76.15.8	255.92
	To do. pd. O. Carlton, drawing sundry maps	4.	
	To do. pd. Thos. Wallcott copying Maynard & Hollands book	5.	
Feb. 24	To do. pd. O. Carlton drawing sundry maps	<u>6.</u>	15.
Mar. 10	To do. pd. Nathan Jones, recording deeds Penobscot		5.
Apr. 4	To do. pd. do. on acct. taxes Gregoire purchase		40.
Jun. 1	To do. pd. his bond to Thos. Davis, Treasr., due this day		23,500.
Aug. 4	To do. pd. O. Carlton adjusting division line with Gregoire		2.
6	To do. pd. bond to Stn. Verow (for Gregoire purchase) dated Augt. 1792 for	311.19	
	Interest due thereon for 1 year	<u>18.14.4</u>	
		£330.13.4	1,102.23
21	To do. pd. Jos. Hall, attorney, drawing special contracts with La Roche, deed to Col. Walker, etc., etc.		35.
	To do. pd. Stn. Jones' acct. attending the exploration of the Million Acres p. acct.		196.37
Dec. 26	To do. pd. Wm. Shaw, being the first payment of land purchased of him p. acct.		2,102.38
	To do. pd. fees at Secretarys office	.15	
	To do. pd. Thos. Davis discount on a \$1,000 note	1.16	
	To do. pd. Judge Sullivan bill fees	6. .	
	To do. pd. for a power of attorney	<u>3.</u>	
		£11.11. .	38.50

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1795

Feb. 1	To do.	pd. his bond to Thos. Davis, Treasr., due this day for	6,500.
		To do. pd. copying field books, etc.	20.
4	To do.	pd. for a tin map case	1.67
Mar. 9	To do.	pd. Thos. Wallcot, copying John Peters' field book	8.
		To do. pd. Park Holland's expenses to Philadelphia	111.17
Apr. 17	To do.	pd. at sundry times amot. of John Peters & Sons acct. of surveying Million Acres, between Penobscot & Schoodic, also the rivers within the tract, & their acct. settled this day £599.16	1,999.33
May 16	To do.	pd. Wm. Shaw for taxes at Gouldsbh. p. his acct.	40.97
Jun. 1	To do.	pd. his bond to Thos. Davis, Treasr., due this day	23,000.
		To do. pd. interest on his note at Union Bank for \$10,000	168.
			23,168.
Jul. 12	To do.	pd. Wm. Shaw's draft favour Thos. Hill, dated Gouldsborough June 12th 1795	387.75
29	To do.	pd. do. on acct. of land purchased at Gouldsborough on his acct. p. receipt	1,000.
		Amount carried forward	\$91,892.49
		To Amount brought forward	\$91,892.49
Sep. 5	To Cash	pd. for 56 bushells herd grass, old Mr. Holstiern p. acct.	220.33
Nov. 12	To do.	pd. Jos'h Hall, attorney, viz. for services touching covenant with De Gregoire	£10.10.
		deeds with La Roche	6.
		Indentures with John Peters surveyor	1. 4.
		deeds with La Roche, arguing cause before referees, etc.	3. 6.
		deeds between Wm. Shaw & himself	6. .
		fee & consultation touching Committee	1.10.
			£28.10.
			95.
Dec. 3	To do.	pd. discount on his note of hand for 1,000 dollars recd. of him, when in Philadelphia, 60 days date, in favour of Joseph Anthony & Son	10.50

1796

Jan. 30	To do.	pd. his bond to Thos. Davis, Treasr., dated 28 Jany 1793	6,297.
Mar. 12	To do.	Wm. Shaw amot. of second instalment of Gouldsh. Purchase, p. rect.	2,253.03
	To do.	pd. discount 2½ p. ct. on draft of this date for \$2,310.80	57.77
			2,310.80
17	To do.	pd. Nathan Jones, for taxes p. acct.	100.88
	To do.	pd. amot. of sundry supplies furnished Genl. David Cobb, p. acct. rendered him this day £828.6.5	2,761.07
Apr. 10	To do.	pd. G. Stillman, Register of Deeds at Machias	1.22

28	To do.	pd. Wm. Shaw p. rect. for second payment of land purchased of him in April 1794	441.30	
		pd. discount on drafts for \$406.23 and \$48.71 of this date favour of Wm. Shaw	13.64	454.94
Jun. 25	To do.	pd. H. G. Otis' fee		30.
Jul. 8	To do.	pd. David Cobb's order to John Peters dated Nov. 7, 1795		50.
16	To do.	pd. Eben. Niles' acct.		185.60
	To do.	pd. Julien's do.		111.25
	To do.	pd. do. do.		129.77
21	To do.	pd. Wm. Shaw p. rect.		750.
Sep. 8	To do.	pd. postage of letters, when on tour at eastward		15.50
	To do.	pd. Mr. Woodward, for writ & service, on acct. of hack hire to Mr. Moors at Charlestown		4.75
16	To do.	pd. his note at the Branch Bank in my favour dated July 14, 1796, 60 days for		1,200.
22	To do.	pd. Jonathan Spear hack hire		2.
23	To do.	pd. his order to Joseph Weeks		547.33
	To do.	pd. H. G. Otis' acct.		178.
	To do.	pd. Seth Tinkham		7.
	To do.	pd. David Bradlee's acct.		200.81
Nov. 22	To do.	pd. D. Davis' fee		30.
	To do.	pd. H. G. Otis' fee, on acct. of my note to W. Tudor		20.
Amount carried forward				\$107,606.24

1797

	To	Amount brought forward	\$107,606.24
Apr. 27	To	Cash pd. to take up his note at the U.States B.Bank	467.38

1798

Jan. 13	To do.	pd. Trask & Spun, for trucking of 2 trunks	.72
	To do.	pd. Andrew Morton's bill for horse hire in 1796	4.
Mar. 21	To do.	pd. Wm. Shaw balance of his acct. relative to Gouldsbrough purchase	921.45
Sep.	To do.	pd. Lemuel Trescott for services rendered in Eastern Purchase	32.

1800

Jun. 19	To do.	pd. my note to Wm. Tudor on acct. of Eastern Purchase, which he promised in the presence of Genl. H. Knox he would repay me	2,683.33
Jul. 2	To	Discount on my draft for 1,000 dolls. at 3 p. ct.	30.
Oct. 31	To	my draft in favour of M. M. Hays dated June 26, 1800, on acct. Tudor's note, refused payment by him & returned	1,683.33

Appendices

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1806

Jul. 31	To his engagement to pay me, for relinquishing the back tract Eastern Purchase, the same sum he had given Royal Flint Esqr. with interest from July 1st, 1794	2,500.	
	Interest on the above to this day from July 1st, 1794 is 12½ yrs.	<u>1,812.50</u>	4,312.50
	To Interest on \$1,683.33 on my draft returned, from Oct. 31st, 1800 to this day is 5¾ years		580.75
	To My Commission for receiving & paying \$109,053.84 at 2½ p. ct.	<u>2,728.</u>	
			<u>\$121,049.70</u>
	Boston July 31st, 1806		

NOTE: The credit side of this ledger has not been transcribed, since it consists almost entirely of Jackson's drafts on Bingham, most of them in favor of M. M. Hays. The one item of interest is the payment by the Commonwealth of \$4,684.40 on 11 May 1804, being a refund on the advances made for the back tract. This refund was made after Jackson had agreed to give up all claims held under that contract.

The balance due Jackson on 31 July 1806 was, according to this account, \$4,287.77, not including his claim to the residuary profits on 100,000 acres.

APPENDIX G [BP]

*Maine Lands in Account Current with Sundry Departments from May 1798
to the 1st January 1817.*

RECEIVED \$82,685.36

From John Codman	\$20,845.68
“ Stephen Codman	1,200.
“ Sir Francis Baring & Co.—draft on them	666.66
“ Heirs of William Bingham Esqr.	674.88
“ John Richards Esqr.	4,713.64
“ Store at sundry times (exclusive of notes transferr'd)	10,175.52
“ Gouldsboro' Packet, gain'd	678.63
“ Interest account	665.87
“ Saw mill No. 1—Gouldsboro'	1,537.11
“ do. 2— do.	759.71
“ do. 4—Mariaville (exclusive of logs)	204.95
“ Timber rents	14,279.27
“ Hay rents	1,248.59
“ Settlers, for land sold in part & for settlers rights	<u>16,034.85</u>

\$82,685.36

DISBURS'D \$79,579.81

In Store	\$11,831.21
“ Wharf & store thereon	1,286.50
“ Taxes, paid for sundry towns	5,634.24
“ Surveying department	5,475.59½
“ Road cutting	5,855.72
“ House building	10,189.44
“ Saw Mill No. 3 at Annsburgh	1,263.17
“ do. Nonsuch at Machias	1,115.43
“ do. Republican do.	1,825.
“ Annsburgh Settlement, for improvements	1,184.13
“ Beddington do. do. do.	1,991. 2
“ Mariaville do. do. do.	3,332.23
“ Olemon do. do. building a grist mill in part	200.
“ Township—Gouldsboro' for purchase of a lot etc.	206.25
“ do. Steuben do. 200 acres	400.
“ do. No. 20. M.D., for improvements on a lot	175.
“ do. No. 22. E.D., for ⅛ of expences	4.24
“ Advances to settlers (balance)	10,679.26
“ Exchange on England, remitted to Mr. Baring	888.88
“ Sundry expences, for Mr. Black's salary, journeying, etc.	<u>16,002.49½</u>

79,579.81

1816

Decr. 31 Balance of cash in hand

3,105.55
\$82,685.36

Appendices

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Land sold from May 1798 to 31st Decr. 1816—41,248 acres, 82 rods, exclusive of land sold to Mr. Tilden	\$62,173.09
Average sales of land to settlers from May 1798 to 31 Decr. 1816 is pr. acre \$1.76½	
Total received for land sold to settlers	15,625.17
Balance of land sold to settlers, & held as security—28,157 acres, 34 rods	
Balance due for land sold, exclusive of interest for which the above acres are held as security.	46,433.92

APPENDIX H [BP]

*Schedule of Penobscot Tract Formed with Reference to the Division of the Same
Received from General Cobb.*

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William Bingham's Maine Lands

Townships	Division	Cont. Acres	Reserved for Lottery Rights, etc.	Settlers Rights	Rec'd for Settlers Rights	Acres Sold Acres	Acres Rods	Amot. Sold for	Cash Rec'd for Land Sold	Balance Due for Land Sold	Acres Unsold Acres Rods
Strip of Land	North	23,202									
Township No. 1	"	23,040									23,202
"	"	23,040					978 112	\$ 1,055			22,061 48
"	"	23,040	6,240								16,800
"	"	23,040	1,760								21,280
"	38 Middle	23,040	4,320				1,260 59	1,506.75			17,459 101
"	"	23,040	1,920								21,120
"	"	23,040	4,160								18,880
"	"	23,040	4,320								18,720
"	"	23,040	3,520				18,720*				
"	"		800*					1,440			
"	34	23,040	2,080								20,960
"	26	23,040	2,560				3,140	4,900			17,340
"	27	23,040	2,560				2,240	3,840			18,240
"	28	23,040	1,920								21,120
"	20	23,040	2,560				1,760*				
"	"						3,676*	5,752			15,044
"	21	23,040	2,720				640	880			19,680
"	22	23,040	2,720								20,320
"	14	23,040	1,600				1,220	3,030			20,220
"	15	23,040	2,880				396 35	790.50			19,763 125
"	16	23,040	2,720								20,320
"	8	14,000	1,280	400 \$ 30			256 96	593.25			12,063 64
"	"	23,952	1,280	1,400 176			585 36	1,397.60			20,686 124
"	9	23,952	1,280								22,672
"	10	23,952	1,280								2,054
Ellsworth		2,254					200	600			
Trenton		5,237					318 120†				
							2,199 32	5,310.33			2,719 8
Sullivan		900									900
Islands purchased of De Greoivre											
		27,326					5,375 86	12,115.48			21,950 74
		525,543	54,400	1,800	\$206		43,766 96	\$43,180.91	\$9,736.4	\$33,444.87	45,576 64

Cash received for land sold in these townships \$9,736.4
Balance due for land sold in these townships \$33,444.87

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